

TERROR



NO. 40
MARCH

5¢ 10¢

TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT



10¢

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



JACK
POTTER



SO WHAT? SO YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!**

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS, ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EVERY MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL.

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

SO, ALL RIGHT! SO HERE'S MY TWO BITS. SO MAKE ME A MEMBER, ALREADY, AND SEND ME THE THINGS AND STUFF LIKE WHAT THE KID UP THERE GOT... SO!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____

STATE _____

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

REH, HEH! I SEE YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR HORROR AGAIN. WELL, REST ASSURED, YOUR APPETITE WILL BE SATISFIED. IN FACT, WHEN YOU'RE THROWN WITH THIS PUTRID PERIODICAL, YOU WILL HAVE LOST YOUR APPETITE ENTIRELY. SO DON'T JUST STAND THERE GROOLING. COME IN! WELCOME ONE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWL, YOUR MANSEATING RARNATOR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CHILL YOUR SPINE AND CIRCLE YOUR BLOOD WITH THE SPINE-JINGLING TALE OF TERROR. I SHALL...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



THE WOMAN PEERS INTO THE SHADOWS, STRAINING TO SEE, HER HEART RACING. THE MAN STEPS INTO THE DRIED GOLD LIGHT, HIS ARMS EXTENDED...



THEY EMBRACE...NARPLY... PASSIONATELY...HEMPSY LIPS... HOLDING CLOSE...



THE MAN LOOKS INTO THE WOMAN'S EYES, GRAY-GREEN IN THE MOONLIGHT. HE FAINTS

MR. ERIC, HE HAS ALWAYS TAUGHTED ME WITH THE POWER HE HAS OVER ME!



THE MAN SHAKE HIS HEAD SADLY, STROKING THE WOMAN'S SOFT FLOWING HAIR...



WE DISCOVERED THE ABILITY QUITE BY ACCIDENT MANY YEARS AGO. CARL IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED ITS GREAT VALUE. BEFORE I KNEW IT, WE'D TRAINED MR. A MIND-READING ACT, JOINED THIS TRAVELING CIRCUS, AND WE'RE MARRIED...



MISERABLE! I KNOW NOW THAT CARL NEVER LOVED ME. I WAS HIS SUBJECT... HIS THOUGHT-PROJECTION READER... A PIECE OF APPARATUS... NOTHING MORE. BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT REAL LOVE IS... NOW THAT I'VE MET FOOL.



NEVER! IF I DO, HIS ACT GOES HE'D NEVER GIVE ME A DIVORCE. THERE'S NO USE ME ASKING!

THEN WE WILL FLOW APART. JOIN ANOTHER CIRCUS. I HAVE HAD MANY OFFERS. AN ANIMAL TRAINER IS, IN GREAT DEMAND.



THE WIND BURNS ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS... WHISPERS AROUND THE TENT ROPES, GAPS AGAINST THE CANVAS... CARRYING THE SIGH, THE WHISPERS, THE GAES OF THE LOVERS IN THE SHADOW, AND IN HIS TENT, CARL STIRRS LINEARLY... OPENING EYES...

MARTA... I... MARTA? MARTA?

HER BED? IT IS EMPTY? WHERE COULD SHE BE?



CARL SLIPS ON A ROBE AND COMES OUT OF HIS TENT... OUT INTO THE WHISPERS, BURNING, GASPING WIND. VOICES! COMING FROM BEYOND THE NEW ANIMAL TRAINER'S TENT...

... HIS VOICE, AND MARTA'S



CARL MOVES THROUGH THE MOON-LIT NIGHT, HIS EYES BURNING LIKE HOT COALS... LISTENING...

... AND AT THE END OF THE MONTH WHEN I GET MY CHECK, WE WILL LEAVE, TOO, AND I... TOGETHER...

OH, YES... YES...



... LISTENING TO THE GOODNESS IN HIS WIFE'S VOICE, THE PASSION, THE HUNGER...

... BUT LET'S NOT TALK ANYMORE, ERIC, DARLING. HOLD ME CLOSE...

SWEET MARTA...



... AND THEN, SLOWLY, HE RETURNS TO HIS TENT ONCE MORE. HE HAS HEARD ENOUGH...

... SHE... SHE HAS FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HIM. SHE IS LEAVING ME. SHE... I... I MUST STOP HER!

... BUT, NOW...



THE MOONLIGHT STREAMS THROUGH THE OPEN TENT-FLAP... FALLING ACROSS THE PRINT, BLACK LETTERS ON GOLD WHITE, THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER...

... WHAT'S THIS? "EDDIES DISINTERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD... TORN TO PIECES AS IF ATTACHED BY WILD BEAST!"



OF COURSE! "TORN TO PIECES BY WILD BEAST!" THAT'S HOW I CAN STOP HER FROM LEAVING. THAT'S IT!



LATER, WHEN MARTA RETURNS FROM HER RENDEZVOUS, AND CRASHES BACK INTO ERIC, CARL PRETENDS HE IS ASLEEP.



ONLY AFTER MARTA HAS SLIPPED OFF INTO DEEP SLEEP, DOES CARL STIR... AND RISE... AND SO OUT OF THE TENT...



... AND CROSS DIRECTLY TO THE NEW ANIMAL TRAINER'S TENT WITH GUN IN HAND.

HUH? WHO'S THERE? WHO... GET UP... AND DON'T MAKE A SOUND!



ERIC STUMBLIES TO HIS FEET...

WHAT'S THE MEANING? SO YOU OF THIS, CARL? PUT DOWN THAT GUN! YOU'RE GOING TO RUN OFF WITH MY WIFE, EH, ERIC? WELL, WELL, WELL SEE ABOUT THAT, MORE!



CARL MOTIONS ERIC OUT OF THE TENT AND DOWN THE LONG SILENT MARCH TOWARD THE BIG-TOP...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, CARL?

I, ERIC, I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING! YOUR LION WILL DO THE WORK!



THEY CROSS THE TANBARK FLOOR OF THE BIG TOP UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION CAGE. THE TANBARK BEATS BACK AND FORTH RUMBLING...

MY LION?!

YES, ERIC. I'M GOING TO PUT YOU IN THE CAGE WITH HIM... WITHOUT YOUR KNOB... WITHOUT ANYTHING... JUST YOU AND YOUR LION!



WITHOUT MY KNOB? I'D BE HELPLESS, PARALYZED... UNABLE TO DEFEND MYSELF! FOR GOD'S SAKE, ERIC, HAVE PITY!

PITY IS AN EMOTION BELONGING TO THE PITIFUL, ERIC. GET IN...



CARL SWINGS OPEN THE BARRICADED DOORS AND PUSHES ERIC SCREAMING AND GOING SPARKLING. THE LION SNARLS...



...AND THEN, THE CIRCUS GROUNDS ECHO WITH THE BLOOD-CURLING SHRIEK OF A MAN BEING TORN TO SHREDS BY THE RAZOR-SHARP FANGS OF A BLOOD-CRADLED HEART...



ERIC'S AGONIZED SHRIEK ECHOES AND SHE LOOKS AROUND WORRIED...

CARL? WHAT WAS THAT?
CARL? CARL?



CARL'S BED IS EMPTY! OUTSIDE THE TENT, FOOTSTEPS FOUND UP THE midway TOWARD THE BIG-FOOT MARTA SLIPS ON A ROPE AND BURSTS FROM THE TENT...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
HAPPENING?
IT'S COMIN'
FROM THE
BIG-FOOT?



She runs with the rest of them...
until they come to the lion trainer's cage...

GOOD LORD!

ERIK!
ERIC!



SHE SCREAMS HIS NAME TWICE, AND THEN SHE JUST STANES THERE, WATCHING THE BEAST LICK AT THE SLASHED AND MARRIED BODY UNTIL SHE HAS TO TURN AWAY AS THE MASKED BEASTS OVER HER...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
THE CRAZY FOOL! HE
MUST HAVE COME OUT
HERE TO PRACTICE
HIS ACT!

AT THIS
TIME OF
NIGHT?
CHOKED



AND THEN, SICK, SHE RETURNS TO HER TENT AND SITS AND WAITS, CRYING, UNTIL CARL COMES IN WITH THAT EVIL GRIN ON HIS COLD IMPENITENT FACE...



YOU DID IT,
BROUGHT YOU!
YOU KILLED
MIMI. YOU KNEW!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR
WHAT THEY SAID,
MARTA? THEY SAID
HE MUST HAVE BEEN
PRACTICING HIS
ACT!

BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MARTHA'S MIND AS TO HOW ERIC FEELS. EARL'S BED WAS EMPTY WHEN ERIC SLEEPS AWAKENED HER. THE SHEETS WERE COLD.



THE NEXT DAY'S PERFORMANCE IS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE TRADE. THE TENTS ARE LOWERED. THE CIRCUS PREPARES TO MOVE ON.



IT HAPPENS SUDENLY... WITHOUT WARNING. CARL IS HELPING WITH THE DISMANTLING OF THE BIG-TOP WHEN THE MAIN SUPPORT TUMPLIES...



THE HEAVY POLE CRASHES DOWNWARD UPON CARL, CRUSHING HIM BENEATH ITS IMPOSITIVE WEIGHT...



...AND WHEN THE HEAVY SUPPORT IS LIFTED, CARL LIES DEATHLY STILL. HIS GLAZED EYES STARE...



MARTHA IS SUMMONED. SHE STANDS IMPASSIVELY OVER HER HUSBAND'S BODY, SHEDDING NO TEARS, SHOWING NO SIGN OF EMOTION...



MARTHA'S VOICE IS COLD... CALLUS... AS SHE KNOWS SOMEBODY NEED FOR AN UNDER-TAKER...



MARTA LOOKS DOWN AT THE STILL FORM OF HER HUSBAND LYING ON THE TOMBSTONE FLOOR. AND EVEN THOUGH SHE READS HIS THOUGHTS, SHE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF RECOGNITION...

MARTA! MARTA, I AM ALIVE! I'M NOT DEAD! MARTA! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! TRY TO HEAR WHAT I AM THINKING! I'M PARALYZED, MARTA! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M PARALYZED! I CAN SEE! I CAN HEAR! I CAN'T MOVE!



AS THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS ASSISTANT LIFT POOR CARL INTO THE COFFIN, MARTA WOOS FORWARD...

MARTA! PLEASE! I GAVE ME! I'M ALIVE! MARTA! I'M ALIVE! PARALYZED! NOT DEAD! PARALYZED! MARTA! PLEASE...



OH, MARTA! THANK YOU! YES, MAMA!



PLEASE DON'T BURY HIM, BURY HIM AS HE IS. HE WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THAT WAY!



ANYTHING YOU SAY, MAMA?



MARTA, MAMA, AND?



GOOD-BYE, CARL!

MARTA! OH, BOY! MARTA...

AT THE FUNERAL, MARTA STANDS, HER FACE A GRIM MARK, BESIDE THE YAWNING PIT BELOW CARL'S COFFIN...

YOU CAN STOP THEM, MARTA! THERE'S STILL TIME. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME. I KNOW IT! PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU! DON'T LET THEM BURY ME ALIVE!

LOWER THE COFFIN!



AND EVEN THOUGH THE SOIL IS SHOVELLED DOWN UPON THE COFFIN, MARTA'S FRANTIC THOUGHT WAVES STILL COME THROUGH TO HER. TO HER AND ONLY HER... TO MARTA, WHO TURNS AND WALKS AWAY DOWN THE PATH LEADING OUT OF THE CEMETERY...

MARTA! DON'T DO THIS! PLEASE! SAVE ME! PLEASE FOLLOW... SAVE HER! SAVE ME!



THE AFTERNOON MAKES THE NIGHT BREEDS COME UP, WHISPERING OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS, SIX FEET BELOW, IN HIS COFFIN, CARL CONGRATULATED AS THE FROGS DRYED SLOWLY DISAPPEARED...

MARTA! DON'T DASH! COME SAVE ME! I'LL DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING! HAVE PITY ON ME! HAVE PITY!



THE STARS COME OUT, WHITE PIN-POINTS IN A VELVET SHROUD. A FIGURE MOVES OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS...

I KNOW YOU ARE READING MY THOUGHTS, MARTA! I KNOW...



A SHOVEL DIPS INTO THE SOFT EARTH...

MARTA! MARTA, YOU DID COME YOU DIED!



THE DIGGING CONTINUES, THE SHOVEL SCOOPING AWAY THE SOFT EARTH. FINALLY THE LID OF THE COFFIN SWINGS BACK...

MARTA! DARLING! OH, LORD! YOU'RE NOT MARTA!



AND THEN AS CARL LIES HELPLESS...PARALYZED...LIKE A WORN-TAMER WITHOUT A WHIP...FEELING THE BROWN SHARP TEETH RIPPLING AND TEARING AT HIS FLESH...UNABLE TO SCREAM AT THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN, HE THINKS OF THE NEWSPAPER LYING IN THE MOONLIGHT...THE NEWSPAPER THAT FIRST GAVE HIM THE IDEA OF HOW TO KILL ERIC...

"BOOGIES DASHED TERRIFIED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD, TORN TO PIECES AS IF AT ATTACK BY SOME WILD BEAST!" OH, LORD! THEY WERE BROWN! THIS IS NO BEAST! IT'S A BOOGIE!"



HEH, HEH! TEP, KIDDEST CARL ENDED UP JUST LIKE ERIC... BEING TORN TO BITS AND UNABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF. AS FOR MARTA, SHE READ CARL'S FINAL THOUGHTS, AND GOT QUITE A MENTAL PICTURE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON! JUST ONE MORE THOUGHT ON THIS WHOLE SUBJECT AS THE BOB GEMETERY FOREMAN CAME TELLING HIS BOAT GROWNS, "OH THAT GRAVE-YARD!"

"WELL, ERIC MARTA, SO... TELL, NOW!"



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEM, HEM! SALUTATIONS, SITIME SAVIORERS! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAWNS INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HELL, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU. ONCE WAS WITH A PRIVATE SELF-TAUGHT FROM MY CLOTH-COLLECTION. SO HAVE THE SICKARZ READY AND I'LL UPSET YOUR STOMACH WITH THE TWISTY-TURNER I CALL...

PEARLY TO DEAD

OUR STORY BEGINS DURING WORLD WAR II, WHEN THE UNITED STATES MARINES WERE SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY INCHING ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, INVAADING ISLAND BATTLES FOR EACH BLOODY ATOLL, EACH JAPANESE-INFESTED CORAL ROCK. ONE INK BLACK STARLESS NIGHT, A SMALL BOAT MOVED SILENTLY TOWARD THE CORAL REEF THAT RIMMED THE PEACEFUL LAGOON OF ONE OF THESE JAPANESE-HELD ISLANDS. INSIDE, TWO MEN CROUCHED QUIETLY, STUDYING THE DANCING PIERCING ON THE SHORE ACROSS THE PLACID LAGOON...

BETTER DROG THE ANCHOR, PHIL. THIS IS ABOUT AS CLOSE IN AS WE DARE GO WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

RIGHT, LARRY.



THE ANCHOR SLID OVER THE SMALL BOAT'S SIDE AND DROPPED WITH A MUFFLED SPLASH INTO THE BLUDGE PACIFIC. THEN, STRANGELY, THE TWO MEN BEGAN TO UNDRESS...

WHILE I'M CLEARING THE STEEL NETTING, YOU START SETTING THE DEMOLITION CHARGE, PHIL.



THEY STOOD ALMOST NAKED IN THE PACIFIC NIGHT, MUSCLES RIPPLING. THEY BENT AND SLID THE WEIRDLY SHAPED BLACK RUBBER FLIPPER onto their feet. PULLED THEIR RUBBER MASKS WITH THE ROUND GLASS WINDOWS OVER THEIR FACES...



...AND WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. THE BUSINESS OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE INVASION OF THE FOLLOWING MORNING. THE ONE NAMED LARRY GLIDED DOWNWARD, FLICKING ON HIS LAMP, SEARCHING OUT THE TREACHEROUS PROPELLER-SHATTERING STONES, SETTING...



...AS THE OTHER, THE ONE NAMED PHIL, SWIMMED BELOW THE SURFACE TO THE FILMERS SUNK IN THE LAGOON FLOOR...



SILENTLY, THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... THE FABULOUS FAMERS... SLID OVER THE SIDE OF THEIR SMALL BOAT AND INTO THE QUIET PACIFIC...



WITH THE NETTING CLIPPED AND RAISED AND CUT AWAY AND RENDERED HARMLESS, LARRY SHOT TOWARDS PHIL TO HELP PLACE THE DEMOLITION CHARGE, HIS LANTERN BEAM BURNING ACROSS THE SANDY BOTTOM OF THE LAGOON...



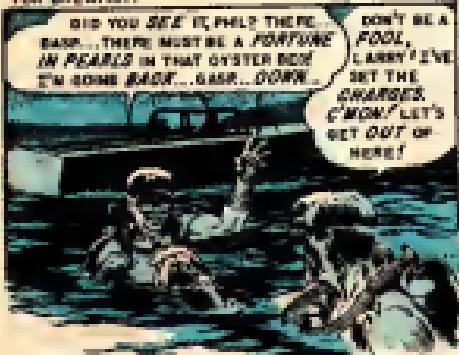
...AND THERE, SUGGESTED, HE SAW IT... STRETCHING AWAY BELOW HIM IN THE SLOOMY MURKY DARKNESS - TWO GIANT EYES...



...AS LARRY CIRCLED OVER THE BEAST, STUDYING THE ABNORMALLY-LARGE SHELLED SEA CREATURES WITH THEIR PRICKLE-SLGED GENS IMBEDDED IN THEIR QUIVERING MEATY BODIES, PHIL SLIDED TOWARD HIM, STARING WIDE-EYES...



THE TWO MEN SURFACED BESIDE THEIR BOAT, GASPING FOR BREATH...



MINUTES LATER, THE SMALL BOAT WAS HURTING SEAWARD. BEHIND, THE DEMOLITION CHARGES EXPLODED IN THE PLACID LAGOON, DEMOLISHING THE NIGHT'S BATTLE SHIPS OFFSHORE TO BEGIN THEIR BARRAGE. LARRY SHORE AHEAD THE GIRL...



AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, THE ASSAULT BOATS STORMED THE QUIET LAGOON, AND PROPELLERS CHURNED BLOOD INTO THE WATERS ABOVE THE OYSTER BED...



THE BEACHHEAD WAR SECURED, THE DEMOLITION TEAM'S WORK WAS DONE. LARRY AND PHIL WERE SHIPPED ELSEWHERE TO OTHER ISLANDS, WITH OTHER LAGOONS...



V-J DAY! PEACE! IT CAME SUDENLY... AFTER THE SECOND A-BOMB WAS DROPPED. THE JAPANESE SIGNED AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, AND THE WAR WAS OVER...



SAN FRANCISCO'S GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE CAME UP OUT OF THE MIST ONE MORNING. THE TROOPSHIP SLIPPED BENEATH IT AND MOVED IN TOWARDS A PIER WHERE BANDS PLAYED AND CHILDREN CHEERED AND WOMEN ROSED HAPPILY.



THEY CAME DOWN THE GANGPLANK, TOGETHER, SIDE BY SIDE, LARRY AND PHIL. BUT THE GIRL THAT WAITED WITH TEAR-STAINED CHECKERS HAD EYES FOR ONLY ONE OF THEM...



LARRY TRIED TO HIDE THE JEALOUS ANGER... THE HURT THAT HE FELT. SLAGY'S PREFERENCE HAD COME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO HIM...



I... I WANTED I UNDERSTAND TO TELL YOU, SLAGY... LARRY? BUT... WELL... I...

PHIL HAD WON AGAIN. IT HAD ALREADY BEEN LIKE THAT... EVER SINCE THEIR COLLEGE DAYS. THEY'D BOTH COME OUT FOR THE JUNIOR TEAM...



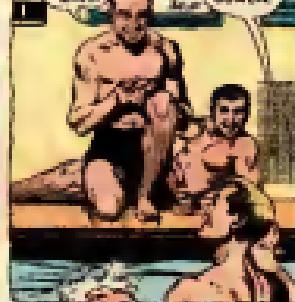
THAT'S GOOD! NAME FOR 'EM. WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS?

LARRY? LARRY MILES!

LARRY'S DONE HIS BEST, BUT PHIL... PHIL HAD DONE JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER.

CONGRATULATIONS, BOY THAT BEATS MILES'S TIME BY EIGHT FEET! OR...

THE NAME'S PHIL CARMON, COACH!



LARRY AND PHIL HAD BECOME FAST FRIENDS IN COLLEGE, BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS THAT RIVALRY BETWEEN THEM...

COME ON, LARRY!

LET'S GO, PHIL!



MILES IS GREAT AND CARMON'S BETTER. WE'VE GOT SOME SWIM TEAM THIS YEAR...

NOT ONLY IN THE POOL... BUT ALSO ON THE CAMPUS. HERE, YOU TWO! I WANT YOU TO MEET SLAGY HARDY! SLAGY, MEET OUR TWO SWIM CHAMPS... LARRY MILES AND PHIL CARMON...

EVERY BODY ARE YOU BODY TONIGHT, MISS HARDY?

SORRY, LARRY! MISS HARDY ALREADY HAS A DATE WITH MEY...

WHEN SLAGY'S HAD COME INTO THEIR LIVES, THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO BOYS HAD INCREASED. THEY'VE BOTH FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER...

SLAGY, YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU? SAY "PEACE"... AND I'LL TELL YOU THE BIGGEST ENGAGEMENT RING IN THE STORE...

LARRY I... I LIKE YOU... BUT... WELL, I JUST CAN'T WAKE UP MY MIND!



PEARL HARBOR, AND THE JAP WAS IN A WAR. THE NAVY HAD COME TO LARRY AND PHIL... ASKED THEM TO JOIN THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM. AND THEY'D ACCEPTED...

SO LONG, BABY!

WHITE!

I WILL GOOD-BYE, BOYS! TAKE CARE!



AND NOW THEY WERE BACK FROM THE WAR, STANDARD ON A JAMMED HIGH FULL OF RETURNED SOLDIERS AND SOLDIERS AND HAPPY LOVED ONES, AND PHIL HAD WON AGAIN...



DISCHARGE! CIVILIAN CLOTHES AGAIN! FREEDOM FROM REGIMENTATION! DISCIPLINE! THEY WERE ALL LARRY'S NOW. AND A SECRET, TOO! A MILLION DOLLAR SECRET! JUST ONE THING... ONE THING WASN'T HIS, YET! GLADYS!



LARRY CONVINCED PHIL THAT AFTER HE WAS MARRIED THERE'D BE NO CHANCE TO TRY OUT THEIR EQUIPMENT, AND PHIL RELUCTANTLY AGREED. THEY DROVE OUT TO A LONELY BEACH...



LARRY HAD PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY! WITH PHIL, DAD, GLADYS... THE SECRET OF THE PEARLWEED... EVERYTHING... WOULD BE HIS...



THEY STRUGGLED WILDLY, THERE IN THE FOAMING SURF OF THAT LONELY CALIFORNIA BEACH. LARRY HELD PHIL'S THROAT IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP, UNTIL PHIL'S BODY WENT LIMP AND LIFE LEFT IT AND IT SLIPPED FROM LARRY'S GRASP AND sank beneath the ocean waves...



AND LARRY CAME OUT OF THE WATER ALONE WITH A GRIN SMILE ON HIS FACE AND THE STORY HE'D TELL GLADYS SO CLEAR IN HIS MIND...



GLADYS LISTENED TO LARRY AS HE BOBBED OUT THE STORY OF HOW THEY'D GONE SWIMMING...HE AND PHIL...AND PHIL'D GONE DOWN...AND...

...AND BEFORE I COULD...
BEEP TO HIM, HE WENT
DOWN FOR GOOD. HE...
HE MUST HAVE GOTTER
A CRAMP, I'M TAKED
TO DIVE FOR HIM, BUT
THE UNDERDOCT...

NO!
SIR...
NO, SIR,
LORD!



IT WOULD TAKE TIME LARRY
DECIDED...TIME FOR GLADYS TO
FORGET PHIL. IN THE MEANWHILE,
HE WOULD GO TO THE SOUTH
PACIFIC...TO THE TINY ATOLL WITH
ITS FABULOUS OYSTER BEDS...AND
MARRY HIS FORTUNE.

I'LL BE BACK IN
THREE MONTHS,
GLADYS. PERHAPS,
BY THEN, YOU WILL
HAVE GOTTER OVER
THIS, AND MAYBE I
TALK AND T...



I'LL NEVER
STOP LOVING
HOW LARRY
HAD NEVER
TALKED.

THE TRIP TO THE ATOLL WAS LONG,
BUT LARRY DIDN'T WIND IT. ONCE ON
BOARD, HE LOST NO TIME IN MAKING
FRIENDS...

BABY, YOU'RE THE
MOST GORGEOUS
GIRL ON THIS SHIP
I, I... GASP

WELL...NOT
ON...DON'T
JUST LEAVE
ME AND...



WERE HIS EYES DECEIVING HIM? WAS THE FOAM AND
THE SPRAY AND THE CHURNING WATER BEHIND THE SHIP
PLAYING TRICKS ON HIM, OR DID HE ACTUALLY SEE
THE LIBERATED WHITE BOOFS...

WHAT IS IT, LARRY?

IT'S...IT'S IN THE WATER!
L...NO! IT CAN'T BE!
I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!



AND WAS THE FOUL ODOR OF THE SEA AND DECAY
AND ROTTING FLESH THAT SEARED HIS NOSTRILS
WHEN HE OPENED HIS CABIN DOOR THAT NIGHT JUST
LARRY'S IMAGINATION?



WAS IT A DREAM, OR DID LARRY ACTUALLY SEE THE
WHITE PULPY HIGH-FITTED FACE IN THE PORTHOLE
THAT NIGHT WHEN HE'D BEEN STARTLED OUT OF A SOUND
SLEEP...

HUH? WHO... WHO... GOOD LORD!



AND WAS IT THE SEA, OR DID HE ACTUALLY HEAR
THAT LAUGHTER...THAT BIFFLING BLOOD-CURDLING
LAUGHTER COMING FROM THE MURK BEYOND THE
DECK ALONE?

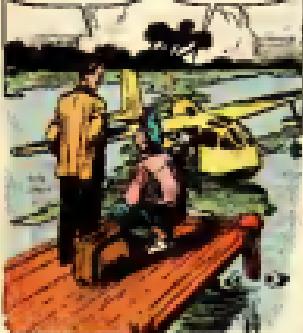
WHO...WHO'S OUT
THERE?



THE SHIP DOCKED AT TAHITI AND LARRY LOST HIS TIME IN HAVING A PLANE TO TAKE HIM SOUTH TO THE ATOLL...

CAN YOU LAND
THIS CRATE IN A
LAGOON?

I CAN DROP
IT ON A GAME
MISTER!



ON THAT PLANE TRIP SOUTH... SKIMMING LOW OVER THE BLUE PACIFIC... WAS LARRY CRAZY... OR DID HE SEE IT AGAIN? THERE JUST BELOW HIM... THAT ADDER, PULPY, BLOATED FORM...

S'WATTER,
MISTER CANNONBALL,
I AM SHORT

CHOKES A
LITTLE, I
GUESS.



THE ATOLL CAME UP, A PEARL AGAINST A BLUE BATH SEA-LIVING, GUARDING ITS OWN PEARL TREASURE. LARRY CANT HIS FEARS FROM HIS MIND WHEN HE SAW IT...

THERE IT IS! LAND
IN THAT LAGOON!

RIGHT!



THE TINY SEAPLANE CAME DOWN GENTLY AND SAT BOMBING QUIETLY IN THE BLUE LAGOON AS LARRY UNSTRAPPED HIS GEAR, REMOVED THE FLIPPERS AND THE RUBBER GLASS-WINDOWED MASK, AND BEGAN TO UNSTRAP...

HEY! WHAT'S
GOING ON?
YOU GONE TO
GIVE ME
SOMETHING?

YEH THERE'S AN OYSTER BED
IN THIS LAGOON. WITH PEARLS
THE SIZE OF YOUR FIST AND
I'M GOING TO GIVE ME A FEW



TINY FISH SCATTERED BEFORE HIM AS LARRY SHOT DOWNWARD. HE PASSED THE OLD RUSTED NETTIES... THE BURKEN ASSAULT BOATS... THE WATER-LOADED BLASTED PILING. AND THEN HE SAW IT... THE OYSTER BED. HE SWAM TOWARD IT... EAGERLY...



LARRY WAS SO BUSY WRENCHING THE LARGEST OYSTER HE COULD FIND FROM THE SANDY BOTTOM THAT HE NEVER NOTICED THE PUTRID, SLIMY, WHITE FORM DRIFT TOWARD HIM. AND WHEN ITS BLOATED ARMS CLOSED AROUND HIS NECK, AND THE ROTTED FACE GRINNED AT HIM, IT WAS TOO LATE...

PHW... CHOKES... GLUBS...



HEH, HEH! YEH, BIDDIES! THAT'S MY TAIL. THE FLESH OF THE SEAPLANE WAITED AROUND FOR LARRY TO COME UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. FINALLY, HE SHRIEKED, WENT THROUGH LARRY'S PANTS, EXTRACTED THE MONEY FROM HIS WALLET TOSEND THE REST OF LARRY'S GEAR INTO THE LAGOON, AND FLOOR OFF, AND YOU'LL TAKE OFF WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR PAY FROM THAT E.G. FAN-ADDICT CLUB, NOW

I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO
CAT! I'LL SEE YOU
NEXT IN MY NEXT THE
VAULT OF HORROR!
BYE! E.G., THAT'S



THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Hoh, hoh! The story and I'm getting bushy! Nobody writes criticizing me anymore—nobody writing threatening letters! Now all I get is poetry—song titles—book titles—and presents! Books like the whole country's gone crazy! Well, as Lincoln used, 'To gods give the people what they want'—Lincoln said THAT—and Tech, JOE Lincoln, is now a diverse movie creature of Omaha, Nebraska. Speculator in 3-D pictures. Only ever equipped with polished wooden clubs allowed. I.D.A., here! We thought you meant IN KING Lincoln—and I INVITED Lincoln! When does HE die? He goes around saying, 'We gotta give the people what they want'—and I OH HIM! So everyone, here are the latest additions to EC's HORROR HIT PARADE, suggested by Berrie and Stanley Chastang of Spring Valley, New York; Bill Russo and Lee Mignone of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Mike Laskin of Philly; F. Woods of Wisconsin, Wis.; Donald Eversmann of Chicago; Tony D'Amato and Gregory Romano of N.Y.C.; Dorothy Stevens of Ardmore, Pa.; Marianne Bryan of Indianapolis, Ind.; Dennis Borzoujian of Green Springs, Mass.; and Peggy DeMars and Lloyd Gold of Detroit, Mich.:

TERRESTRIAL SCREAM (from SLIME-LIGHT)
BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MAIL IS OVER
SEVEN BLOODYEYES NIGHTS (MALE GORE
VAMPIRE WEAK)
I BELIEVE THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF
BLOOD THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS!
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW! INWATCHING
THE BLOOD DROPS FALL!
LYMM-BOATS ARE A-COMIN'
WITH THESE GLANDS
THE SQUEAL OF TORTURE
I'M WINCING WITH SPARKS IN MY THROAT
RATTLE HYMN OF THE REPULSIVE
TO THE FAULTS AGAIN WITH YOU
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
SQUEALY YOU WERE HERE!
WHO'S GOAT MOM?
DEEP IN THE MEAT OF TEX
WITH MY HEAD WIDE OPEN I'M SCREAMING
WHEN YOU GORE HER TWO-LIFE
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROAN TO
IDA TASTES LIKE APPLE CIDER
THE GIRL THAT I BURN
SEND ME ONE DOZEN MORE
JUNE IS GUSHING OUT ALL OVER

And here are some more additions to our LITERARY LIBRARY, just along by Harry Crews of Dallas, Texas; Jimmy Ted of Finsville, W. Va.; and Bruce Moore of Springfield, Ill.

BOURG FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING SIGHTS
HOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MOHICANS

THE GUARD OF OXEN
GREAT EXPECOTORATIONS AND
GREAT REQUERATIONS
AGONY AND CLEOPATRA
ROMEO—THE GHOUL HE ET
LORNA'S DOOM

And now for some MORRID MOVIES, produced by Devil Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine, and the Campbell and Amato Alexander of Waycross, S.C.:

A STREETCAR MAIMED BY SIRE
THE AFRICAN'S SPLINTER
MHN BROWN
MUNG REE
CALL ME MAD MAN
THE GREATEST CHOICE ON EARTH
WRONG SOLOMON'S SPINE
THE FARMER TAKES A LIFT

Now PULSATING POGROMS, directed by Wolf Andrews of Melrose, Mass., and Willard Johnson of Jackson, Miss.

HATCHET SQUAD
BLIND MATE
MONACE DAY
MARTIN SLAIN
SCARY MOORE
BLOD HOPE
DEAD SKELETON

Look and probably soon some PENTENTED POETRY

BANQUET

We had some friends in to dinner
Everything was perfectly swell
But mother spoiled the party
She simply didn't taste well!

—John Elton Clark
Brooklyn, N.Y.

AUCTION

Robbery, Doctor, Deck,
No Need Baled off the Stock

Now that the entertainment's over, which one
Now calls the commercials? EC FAN-ADICT CLUB

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CHOICE!

The ground was soft and clinging as Farraday slipped out of the thick forest surrounding the prison wall. There was a heavy mist rising from the ground, and all around him he could hear the incessant clamor of the jungle. The long, dark foliage swayed eerily in the hot night air... it would partially cover the sound of his feet moving through the oozy jungle lanes.

Farraday moved along stealthily, like a hunted animal, his plan of escape churning in his mind. If he could creep through the jungle into the miserable little seacoast town and hide in one of the grimy steamboats moored at the crumbling wharfs, in a week or so he'd probably be gone forever from this cursed tropical penal colony. The discomfort and pain of escaping through the jungle was nothing compared to the prospect of another five years in prison, Farraday thought to himself. He HAD to get away, at all cost, for he could never live through the prison sentence, anyway. The giant flies and vicious mosquitoes and stinging, blood-sucking spiders swarming over the camp by the millions would eat him alive long before he was ready for release!

Farraday paused momentarily, listening intently for a sound of alarm. Then he straightened up, ignoring the fact that his trembling hands were trembling with nervousness, and plunged on through the sniffling undergrowth. They hadn't discovered yet that he was gone... every minute he could gain would help immeasurably in his getaway.

He was coming to clearer ground now: the earth was dry and sun-parched, the trees were spaced further apart and the grass was lower and less matted. He'd have to be careful here, for he could be spotted as he moved through the open valley. He crouched again and

moved slower, his body bent like an ape swinging along the jungle floor. About 50 yards he proceeded, then his heart almost stopped beating: a shrill whistle had sounded far back. His escape had been detected! In another moment the guards would be overrunning him and dragging him back to that insect-infested hell behind the towering stone walls!

Farraday knew his only chance was to dig a shallow grave and slip into it, praying that the darkness of the night would hide him. With a frenzy born of desperation he began to scoop up the earth at his feet; in a few moments he had cleared a patch large enough for his body. He dropped face-down into it without a second's hesitation.

Almost before he had drawn another breath he was aware of a clammy tangling spreading over his exposed flesh. It was pitch-black, but he knew without seeing what it was that was swarming over him: he had plunged headlong into a nest of white maggots! Already they were tearing at his skin, their stinging pincers probing his cheeks and jaw, sinuous lines striking into his nostrils and mouth. His eyelids felt as if they had caught fire... but Farraday didn't move a muscle. Even as he felt the stabbing pain at his throat and realized that the skin of his chest, inside his shirt, was being torn loose, he could think of only one thing: He was in fiery agony, but if only he could stay here in this shallow trench, the guards would never find him! And as his mind reeled and his body writhed uncontrollably... as his blood trickled from a thousand deadly wounds... he was solaced by one thought: if the guards couldn't find him, he wouldn't have to endure the horrors of prison life again... wouldn't be assailed by giant flies and the savage spiders!



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HERE'S A BUBBLY LITTLE TALE OF
TITANIC TERROR! I CALL IT...

PRAIRIE SCHOONER



MILDRED JACKSON RUSHED OPEN THE DOOR OF HER HOUSE AND SQUEELED WITH JOY. HE STOOD ON THE PORCH, STARVED, FROZEN, DRESSED PRETENTIOUSLY IN HIS CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM, HIS FACE BRONCHED FROM FORTY YEARS ALONE. HIS EYES COLD AND BOURGEOIS, HIS MOUTH DRY. HIS TWO SUIT CASES BESIDE HIM...

EERA! EERA! WHAT NIGHT YOU WRITE ME
YOU WERE COMING TO VISIT' ME, OH, EERA!
IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN...

HELLO, MILDY. GOT A PLACE FOR
YER OLD SEA DOG BROTHER TO
LUM DOWN FOR A SPELL?



© Caplin

MILDY LOS EERA INTO THE PARLOR...

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR
YOU HERE, EERA. YOU KNOW
THAT. HOW LONG WILL YOU
STAY?

JUST A SPELL,
MILDY. JUST TILL
I DECIDE WHAT I'M
GONNA DO NEXT.
SEE...THEY FOUGHT
AWAY MY SHIP, THEY
RETIR'D ME.

RETIR'D...OH,
EERA. I'M SO
SORRY.

WER MY SAILIN' DAYS ARE
OVER, MILDY. I'M A LAND-
LUMPER, NOW. WELL, WHERE
DO I STOW MY SEAS?



THAT WAS HOW EZZA JACKSON CAME TO LIVE WITH HIS SISTER MILEY. AT FIRST, MILEY WAS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE HIM. AFTER ALL, SHE HAD AN OLD MAN... AND EZZA WAS COMPANY. BUT AS TIME WENT ON, EZZA BEGAN TO DO STRANGE THINGS...

EZZA! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT THROUGH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

NOTHING.



ONE NIGHT, MILEY WAS ROUSED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP BY HEART PAINS BEATING HER ROUGHLY...



GET UP, YOU LAZY SNOOZ. IT'S LATE FOR YOUR WATCH, AND IF YOU EVER DO THIS AGAIN, I'LL HAVE YOU TROWN DOWN IN THE BARS.

IT WAS DIVINE TO POOR MILEY THAT HER OLDER BROTHER WAS ILL... MENTALLY ILL. THE SIGHT OF BEING RETIRED HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HIS MIND HAD SHATTERED. HE FANCIED HIMSELF AT SEA AGAIN... THE HOUSE, HIS SHIP... AND SHE, HIS CREW.



YOU CALL THIS DIGNITY? I WANT YOU, EZZA! THIS BECK SCRUBBED TILL I CAN SEE MY REFLECTION! UNDERSTAND?

I SAW WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT WITH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

H-NOTHING, MILEY! I WAS JUST WATCHING THAT SHIP ON THE HORIZON.

SHERIFF! THIS IS KANSAS! THERE AREN'T ANY SHIPS OR THE HORIZON. THERE ISN'T ANY WATER... FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES!



FROM THAT NIGHT ON, MILEY WAS FORCED TO "STAND WATCH" SHE HAD TO MOVE THROUGH THE HALLS OF THE OLD HOUSE FROM TWO AM. TO DAWN, CARRYING A LANTERN AND SHOUTING...



LOUDER, YOU BLITHERING IDIOT!

LOUDER!

EVEN BELLS AND ALL'S MILEY!

DON'T "EZZA" ME! IT'S "YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON!" REMEMBER THAT? NOW, GET TO WORK, YOU BLUSE MAT!

Y-YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON.



MILLY HAD BEEN A SCHOOL TEACHER IN HER YOUNGER YEARS. SHE'S WORKED HARD AND MANAGED TO SAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. SHE'S USED PART OF IT TO BUY THE HOUSE SHE NOW LIVES IN. THE REST, SHE'D INVESTED WHEREVER SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY. BUT WITH ERIC'S ARRIVAL, HER MEAGER INCOME WAS NOT ENOUGH...



SO MILLY WAS FORCED TO EARN EXTRA MONEY TO AUGMENT THE SMALL INCOME SHE DERIVED FROM HER INVESTMENTS. SHE HAD TO TAKE IN WASHING.



ERAZZ STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR FLOOR, STARING ABOUT HIM WITH WIDE BLEAKING EYES...



MILLY WAS HELPLESS. SHE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE... EXCEPT, PERHAPS, TO HAVE ERAZZ PUT AWAY. SO SHE CALLED IN A CARPENTER... A PLUMBER...



EZRA STORMED ABOUT IN THE CELLAR, SHOUTING OUT HIS ORDERS...

TOP OUT THOSE WINDOWS,
CLOSE 'EM UP. PUT UP SOLID
WALLS. BARREDOVY PANLED
WALLS. SET IN PORT HOLES.
REAL PORT HOLES... THAT GREAT...

YES, MR.
JACKSON.

CAPTAIN JACKSON! PUT OCEAN SCENES BEHIND THE PORT HOLES.
HANG SHIPS' LANTERNS AROUND.
PUT IN A BONE, A HAM LEG, A MEAL.
MAKE EVERYTHING AUTHENTIC. THIS
IS MY SHIP!

YES,
CAPTAIN!



AND POOR MILLY WITHDREW HER LIFE'S SAVINGS
FROM HER INVESTMENTS TO PAY FOR THE NOISEMAKER.

4,500... 5,000 DOLLARS.
HERE YOU ARE, MR. BURNETT.

THANK YOU,
MA'AM. I HOPE
YOUR BROTHER
IS HAPPY WITH
THE JOB WE DID.



"BELLOW" IN HIS SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON MELLOWED...

STAND BY TO CAST OFF. ENGINE ROOM,
FULL SPEED ASTERN, ALL HANDS,
MAN YOUR STATIONS... ON THE DOUBLE...



MILLY CAME "ABOVEDECK" CARRYING HER LAUNDRY BASKET FILLED WITH THE WASH SHE'D BEEN
TAKING IN...

WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU
DOING DOWN HERE WITH
THAT?

I'VE GOT TO DO
THE SHIP'S
LAUNDRY, CAPTAIN
I'VE...



EZRA STRUCK OUT SEVERELY...

YOU'LL DO THE LAUNDRY ON DECK,
YOU SCULLION BEGAR. GET OUT
OF MY QUARTERS...

OWWWWW...



WITH HER INVESTMENTS WIPE OUT AND THE INCOME FROM THEM GONE, MILLY HAS TO TAKE IN MORE WASH THAN SHE COULD HANDLE IN ORDER TO MEET EXPENSES. AND EZRA'S ABUSE BECAME WORSE AND WORSE...

"SCRUB OUT THAT HEAD, YOU FO'GUE BRUDDER!"

"EEER, CAPTAIN!"

Poor Milly would escape every chance she could set, and lock herself in the upstairs bathroom in order to do the wash in the tub. And as she screamed, she would listen to Ezra's ranting and raving.

"EASE THE HELM! GIVE 'ER MORE RUDDER! STEADY AS YOU GO! HARD APORT! STEADY! STEADY GO!"

"BOO...BOO..."



ONE HOT SUMMER'S DAY, EZRA STOOD AT THE OPEN PORT HOLE, SHOUTING OUT AT THE SEA-SCAPE SCENE BEYOND...

"AHY! AHY! THERE! SHIP AHY! HOLD FAST. STAND BY!"

WHILE UPSTAIRS, DIRECTLY OVER-HEAD IN THE BATHROOM, MILLY PAMPERED OVER A LOAD OF WASH...



THE HOT WATER, RUNNING INTO THE TUB OVER THE SOAKING CLOTHES, SENT UP CLOUDS OF STEAM WHICH FILLED THE LOCKED BATHROOM...



SUDDENLY MILLY CLUTCHED AT THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN HER CHEST, TOPPLING OVER...

"AASP..."



AS HER HEART FADED AND HER LIFE FADED WITH IT, THE BOILING WATER OVERFLOWED THE TUB, FLOODING ABOUT HER FROSTYING BODY, DRENKING THROUGH THE BATHROOM FLOOR...



IN HIS CELLAR SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON LISTENED AS THE WATER, LEAKING DOWN FROM THE OVER-FLOWING BATHTUB ABOVE, FILLED THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FALSE MAHOGANY PANNELED WALLS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE...

STORMY SEA TONIGHT. BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES. WE'RE IN FOR A BLOW.



THE CELLAR FILLED WITH STEAM, CAPTAIN JACKSON STUMBERED TO THE PORT HOLES, SLAMMED THEM SHUT. THE PRESSURE OF THE WATER CRUMBED THE PANNELED WALLS...



...UNTIL THE RISING HOT WATER REACHED HIS CHIN... HIS NECK...POURED INTO HIS MOUTH AND STICKED HIS TONGUE... HIS THROAT... HIS LUNGS...



SUDDENLY, THE WATER BEGAN TO POUR THROUGH THE OPEN PORT HOLES...



SLOWLY THE WATER ROSE IN THE CELLAR, BOILING, BUBBLING, BUBBLING EZRA'S ARMED BODY. BUT HE STUBBORNLY STOOD FAST.



HOLY CREEP! YEP, HIDDEN. THAT'S MY BURBIS MARINE OPERATING. EZRA FINALLY ERODED UP... IN HOT WATER! THIS IS THE FIRST CASE ON RECORD, BY THE WAY, OF A CAPTAIN GOING DOWN WITH HIS SHIP IN THE MIDDLE OF A KANSAS PRAIRIE... IN A CELLAR! AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE CRYPTKEEPER WHO IS WAITING TO FIND OUT MY REA... RAE! REMEMBER! IF YOU'RE A FEAR AND AN ADDICT... JOIN THE E.C. FAR-ADICT CLUB! YEAH, NOW!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEY, HEY! AND HOH, IT'S MORNING-MEAL-TIME. WELCOME TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, GREECE. THIS IS YOUR REVOLTING RESTAURATEUR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO SLING SLIME...AND END UP AS A BURGEMAN FOR THIS IDIOTIC ISSUE. CARE FOR SOME SEA FOOD? WELL, HERE'S A TASTY TERROR TID-BIT TO TURN YOUR STOMACH. I CALL THIS SLOP-SERVING...

HALF-BAKED!

CAIN DURAN STOOD IN THE SPOTLESS KITCHEN OF "THE SEA SHELL RESTAURANT" STARING IN HORROR-FASCINATION AT THE SIZZLING, BLUE-SHRED, SPIDER-LIKEED CLOAMED CREATURES THAT SCRATCHED DIRTY AROUND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BUTTER TUB. CAUTIOUSLY, HE REACHED IN AND PULLED ONE OF THEM FROM THE TUB, HOLDING IT UP. HE LAUGHED MADLY.



CAIN REACHED FOR A KNIFE. REPLACED THE STRUGGLING LOBSTER, WILLY-NILLY ON THE RUSTIC WOODEN BUTCHER TABLE AND GRIMMED DOWN AT IT.



THE LOBSTER SQUINCHED. CALVIN FORCED THE KNIFE BLADE AGAINST ITS SOFT-SHELLED UNDERSIDE AND, WITH A SLIGHT SWINGING MOTION, CRUSHED IT THROUGH. THE LOBSTER, NOW PRACTICALLY REVERSED IN HALF, STILL WRINCHED ITS SPINY LEGS AND WAVED ITS HUGE CLAWS ANGRILY...

CALVIN MOVED THE THRASHING SPLIT LOBSTER INTO A RACK AND SQUID IT INTO THE STONE, BELOW THE LICKING BLUE FLAMES OF THE BONFIRE...

AND NOW, WE BROKE YOU ALIVE.
WE LISTEN TO YOU HISSE AND POP
UNTIL YOU TURN ORANGE-RED
AND YOU STOP YOUR SQUINCHING...



CALVIN STARED INTO THE STONE AT THE SQUINCHED LOBSTER. HIS EYES BLINDED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AS HE WATCHED ITS STRUGGLING ABATE...

CALVIN GRINNED...

"I MUST LOWER THE FLAME
SO THAT THE NEXT ONE WILL
BE SLOWER!"

BEHIND CALVIN, THE NEW YORK RESTAURANT'S CHEF SHOOK HIS HEAD AS HE WATCHED HIS EMPLOYER...



CALVIN'S FACE BECAME GRIM AS HE TURNED TO HIS CHEF...

"I HATE UGLY AND HORRIBLE
CREATURES. HORRIBLE
CREATURES SHOULD
DIE HORRIBLY!"

"A LOBSTER IS A
LIVING THING, MR.
DURANT. NO LIVING
THING SHOULD BE
MADE TO SUFFER!"



"PERHAPS... TO A
LOBSTER... IT IS YOU
WHO ARE UGLY,
MR. DURANT!"

MEANWHILE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FEW MILES UP THE BEACOAST FROM THE SEA SHELL REEFARM, A FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS INBOARD OVER THE TOSHING OCEAN SWELLS TO A CORK FLOAT FROM WHICH FLEW A TATTERED FLAG.



THE LAST ONE. IF THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ONE, WE WILL HAVE NO MONEY FOR FOOD!

THE FISHERMAN PULLED UP BESIDE THE BOBBING MARKER AND PULLED IT INTO HIS SEA SHIP. SLOWLY, TENACIOUSLY, HE HAULLED IN THE DRIPPING LINE THAT WAS FASTENED TO THE CORK FLOAT...

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. ALL ALONG THE COAST, OTHER LOBSTER FISHERMEN ARE FINDING TWO, MAYBE THREE LOBSTERS IN EACH OF THEIR POTS. FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, I HAVE NOT FOUND ONE.



FINALLY, THE LOBSTER TRAP BURSTED, AND THE FOUL SMELL OF THE FISH HEAD, PLACED WITHIN IT AS BAIT, REALED THE FISHERMAN'S NOSTRILS...



EMPTY! ALL EMPTY! NOT ONE LOBSTER IN ANY OF MY POTS.

SADLY, THE FISHERMAN SWEDDED HIS INBOARD BACK TO THE BEACH WHERE A WOMAN AND CHILD STOOD IN THE DOORWAY OF A WIND-SCARRED SHACK, WAITING...



WELL, AMBROSE! ANY LUCK?

NOT A ONE, LUCKY! NOT ONE LOBSTER! I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.

THE FISHERMAN ENTERED HIS SHACK AND SAT DOWN WEAKLY...

PERHAPS TOMORROW... TOMORROW... WE HAVE SAID THAT FOR TWO WEEKS!



THE CHILD BEGAN TO CRY...

POPPA... POPPA... I AM HUNGRY...

I WILL MAKE THE BOY SOME FISH, AMBROSE.



FROM THE BOY PROBABLY LUCK, LOBSTER'S COULD BUY HIM BULK,

LOBSTERS BRING A GOOD PRICE, BUT I CANNOT CATCH THEM, MY POTS ARE EMPTY!

PERHAPS TOMORROW YOUR LUCK WILL CHANGE, AND YOUR POTS WILL BE FULL, AMBROSE.



THE JEW-SELL RESTAURANT WAS NOTED FOR ITS BOILED LOBSTER. PEOPLE CAME FROM MILES AROUND TO FEAST ON THE SUCULENT WHITE MEAT DIPPED IN BUTTER SAUCE. CALVIN DUSAN DID A THRIFTY BUSINESS.



JOHN NODDED AND LEFT. CALVIN LISTENED AS THE CAR MOTOR ECHOED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, THEN TURNED TO THE ALMOST EMPTY TUB...



THE INDECIDED MOTOR COUGHED AND SPUTTERED, THEN BEGAN TO HUM EVENLY. CALVIN GUIDED THE SHIP OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA...



AFTER DUSHER TIME THAT NIGHT, JOHN, THE CHEF, REMAINED CALVIN...



WE'RE GETTING LOW ON LOBSTERS, MR. DUSAN. IF WE HAVE A GOOD CROWD TOMORROW, WE'LL RUN OUT.

IT'LL PROBABLY BE IN THE MORNING... LET ME TELL YOU...

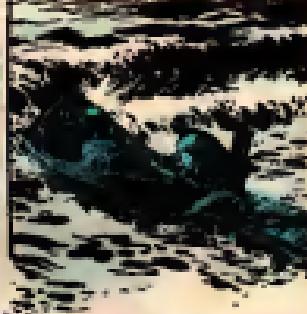
NIGHT, JOHN.

He moved down the beach to where a sea drift was washed, untangling it, Calvin pushed the craft into the oncoming breakers.

AFTER A WHILE, CALVIN LEFT THE RESTAURANT. HE LOCKED UP CAREFULLY, BUT HE DID NOT GET INTO HIS CAR. INSTEAD, HE WALKED DOWN TO THE BEACH...



BLAST IT! THERE'S A BOOM OUT TONIGHT. WELL, I'LL HAVE TO CRASH IT.



A FEW MILES OUT, WE PULLED UP BESIDE A BOBBING MARKER FROM WHICH A TATTERED FLAG FLAPPED...



AMBROSE, THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN, PROUD THE FLOOR OF HIS SHANTY BEACH. LUCY, HIS WIFE, WATCHES HIM WITH SAD EYES.



AMBROSE POINTED OUT TO SEA. OUT TO THE DISTANT TORPEDO SWELLS.

SOMEONE'S OUT THERE! AMBROSE! THAT'S WHY MY LOBSTER TRAPS ARE ALWAYS EMPTY. SOMEONE IS STEALING MY LOBSTERS.



AMBROSE WAS OUT OF THE DOOR OF HIS WEATHER BEATEN SHANTY IN A FLARE.



SUDDENLY CALVIN LOOKED UP. SCARCELY ONE HUNDRED FEET AWAY, ANOTHER SEA SNAFF GLIDED TOWARD HIM SILENTLY.



IT'S THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN. HE MUST HAVE ROWED OUT. THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T HEAR HIM! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

AMBROSE STOPPED PROWLING. HE LISTENED. FAR AWAY OVER THE BOAR OF THE SURF FOUNDING THE NEARBY BEACH, AMBROSE HEARD A SOUND: A DULL HUMMING SOUND.



A SEA SNAFF...OUT THERE IN THE NIGHT. SO THAT'S IT?

WHAT IS IT, AMBROSE?

FAR OUT ON THE MOONLIT WAVES, CALVIN DUGAN LIFTED A LOBSTER POT INTO HIS SEA SNAFF.

TWO BEAUTIES! THAT'S SEVENTEEN ALREADY AND THE ONLY RAIDS HALF OF HIS TRAPS...



CALVIN STRUGGLED WITH HIS INBOARD, TRYING TO STOP IT. THE OTHER SEA SNAFF PULLED ALONGSIDE. THE FISHERMAN IN IT GLARED AT HIM WITH BURNING EYES...



SO? NO WONDER MR. DUGAN HADN'T BOTHERED TO STOP BY LATELY TO SEE IF I HAD ANY LOBSTER TRAPS TO BELL.. HE KNEW!

KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY! I BURN YOU!



THE KNIFE BLADE IN CALVIN QUANT'S HAND
BLURRED IN THE MOONLIGHT.

Now, I'll have to kill you,
and do it... to keep you
from talking.



AMBROSE'S SHREWD BODGER ACROSS THE HEATING WATER AS CALVIN PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO HIS BREATHING BODY AGAIN AND AGAIN...



"NO! I WON'T PAY
YOUR MONEY! IT'S
JAIL FOR YOU...
JAIL...
YOU
FORCE
ME TO DO
THIS,
AM I MAD?"



TYPE: CHAIN LADDER ANTI-CAKE 1200 gm. 100% COT.



... AND CHOPPED A HOLE IN THE FLOORBOARDS, LETTING
THE SEA RAGE IN.



SLOWLY, THE BOAT, WITH AMBROSE'S BODY, BANK BELOW THE TOSSED OCEAN WAVES.

CALVIN STARTED HIS HARBOR AND GUIDED HIS SEA SKIFF BACK TO THE BEACH...

...AND LOADED THE BUTTERTUB WITH THE STOLEN LOBSTERS INTO HIS CAR TRUNK...



HE STARTED HOME, ROARING DOWN THE COAST ROAD AT BREAKNECK SPEED...WHEN THE BLOW-OUT OCCURRED...

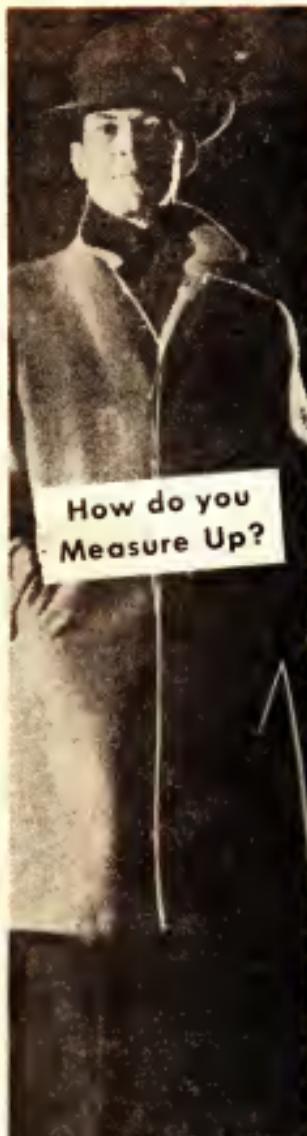
AS CALVIN'S LURCHING CAR SPUN OVER, THE STEERING WHEEL SHATTERED, RIPPING INTO HIS BODY...TEARING...FLASHING...



HE LAY THERE, PAINED, SQUEAMING, HIS BODY ALMOST SPLIT IN TWO, AS THE OVERURNED CAR CAUGHT FIRE AND THE FLAMES LICKED AT HIM AND HE SCREAMED AND SHATTERED AND WAS BOILED ALIVE...



HEE, HEE! THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDIN' CALVIN ENDED UP LIKE THE LOBSTER HE'S BEEN STEALIN'. WHEN I CAME UPON HIS BURNIN' CAR, HE WAS JUST ABOUT DONE. I WAS SO MAD THERE WASN'T A DROP OF BUTTER SAUCE AROUND! AND TALKIN' ABOUT SAUCE, YOU'D BETTER HURRY UP AND JOIN THE E.G. FAR-ADDICT CLUB! MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO 150,000,000 PEOPLE. SO DON'T LOSE OUT! GET YOUR FULL-COLOR CERTIFICATE, YOUR EMBROIDERED PATCH, YOUR WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, AND YOUR HARNESS-LACE FAR. FOR DETAILS, FIELD G.K.'S COLUMN.



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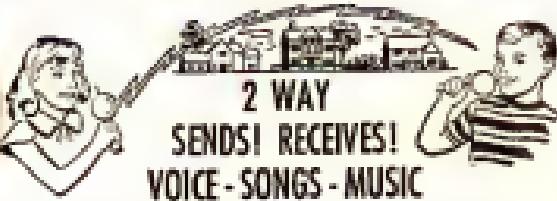
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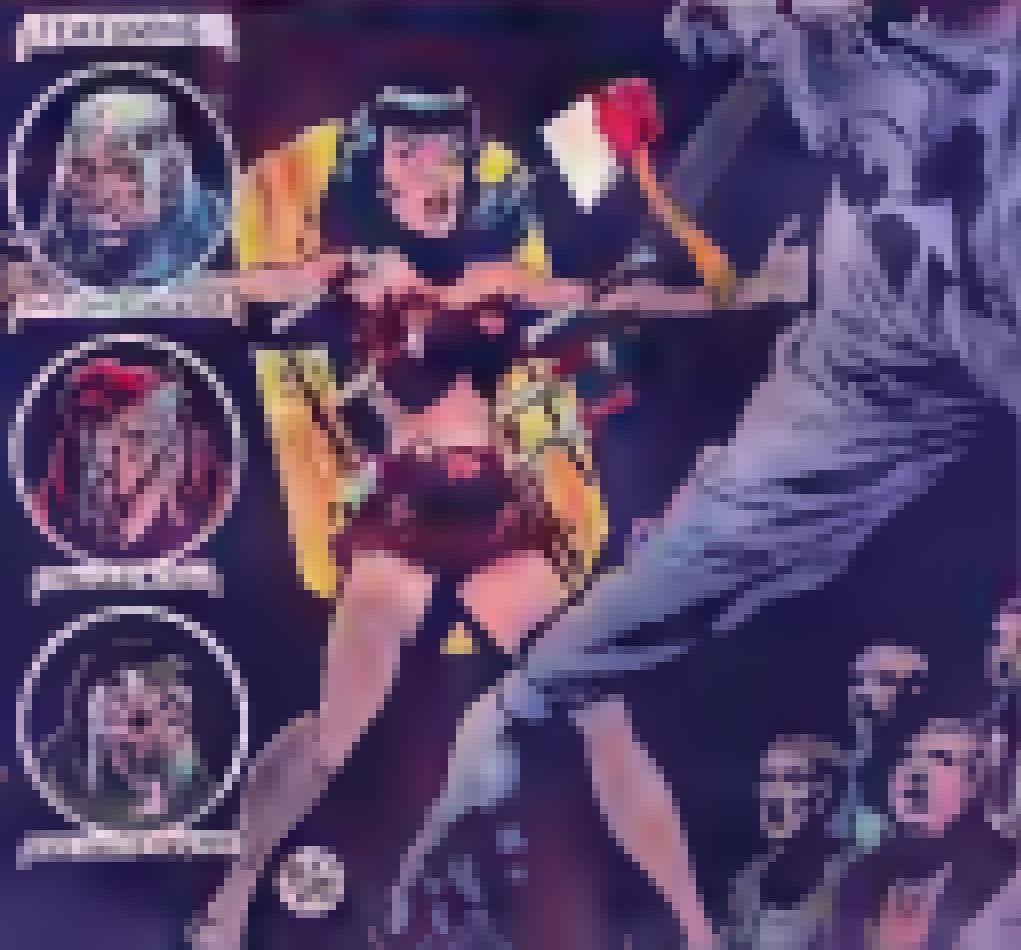
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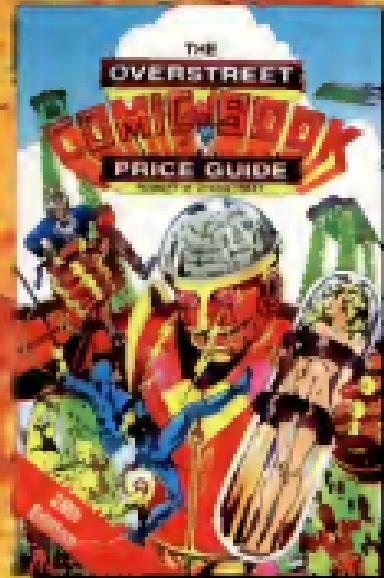
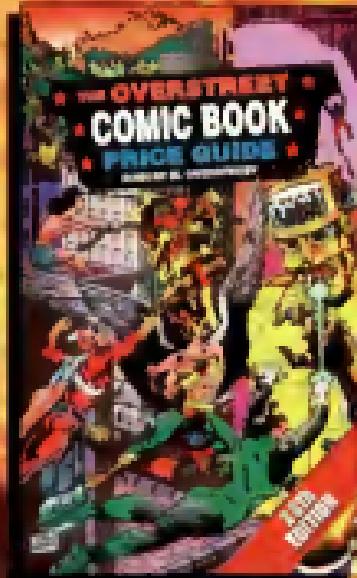
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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH... AND HEH! (JUST TO BE DIFFERENT!) CRAWL INTO THE CRYPT! OLD GRUFFY CRYPT OF TERROR, FERNS! THIS IS YOUR BOUNTIFUL HOUS, LE CRYPT-KEEPER... YOUR MASTER OF GEMERIES... READY TO THROK YOU, CRAWL YOU, AND KILL YOU WITH A SLIMY SELECTION FROM MY FLESHY FILE OF FOUL FAMOUS. READY? WELL, HEH, HEH WITH THE FOLK FARM I CALL... .

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP



SMOKING WARMLY, DOCTOR ANDREW ROBART SETTLED HIMSELF IN HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. A SIGH OF DEEP CONTENTMENT CAME FORTH AS HE FILLED HIS PIPE, LIT A DANCING FLAME, AND PUFFED BLUE SPIRALS TOWARD THE CEILING. IT WAS A RITUAL HE'D OBSERVED FOR LONG YEARS NOW... UNCOUNTED EVENINGS. WITH HIS FRIENDS. TURNING SLOWLY, THE DOCTOR OPENED THE CONVERSATION...

COMFORTABLY, PHILIP T. HOW LET'S RELAX AND ENJOY OUR CHESS GAME... JUST YOU AND I... AS WE'VE DONE THESE PAST FORTY GODD YEARS. AHH... THESE QUIET EVENINGS TOGETHER, PHILIP. THEY'RE ALL WE HAVE LEFT...



DOCTOR ROBART PLACED THE CHESSBOARD ON THE LOW TABLE BEFORE THEM...

OTHERS MIGHT SCOFF, PHIL, BUT I SAY OURS IS ONE OF LIFE'S RARITIES...A PERFECT FRIENDSHIP. A BROTHERSHIP OF THE MINDS... A MENTAL MATING FAR MORE LASTING AND REWARDING THAN THAT OF MAN AND WIFE.



"A GOOD FRIEND IS. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT, PHIL. IT WAS A PART OF DEVOTION THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN ABLE TO TEAR APART IN ALL THESE YEARS!" BOTH SMILE.

EVEN HOPELESS, PHIL, WE'LL BE BROTHERS FOREVER.

TILL WE'RE OLD MEN AND READY TO DIE, AND...



"REMEMBER, PHIL? WE WERE A MODERN DAIRY AND FITNESS. AND AS WE GREW OUT OF BOYHOOD, WE BECAME EVEN CLOSER, IF ANYTHING. REMEMBER, IN HIGH SCHOOL, HOW EVEN THE PRETTIEST GIRLS FAILED TO PULL US APART..."

"SORRY, JOHN! PHIL AND I ARE GOING TO THE MOVIE COUPLESIZES TONIGHT... TOGETHER!"

"I WON'T LET YOU AGAIN, ANDREW ROBART! YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!"



THE OLD DOCTOR WENT ON GARULOUSLY, ALWAYS THE MORE TALKATIVE OF THE TWO, BARTLY GIVING THE OTHER A CHANCE TO SPEAK. HIS VOICE DRIFTED ON... RICH WITH HOLLOW MEMORIES... BORALIC REVERENCE...



"YES, PHILIP. TWENTY YEARS OF TIME, REMEMBER HOW IT ALL BEGAN, PHILIP? NOW, AS KIDS, OUR FAMILIES MOVED NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER REMEMBER?

"REMEMBER HOW, LIKE ALL KIDS, WE WERE SHY AT FIRST, BUT SOONER OR LATER... FOUND THAT WE LIKED THE SAME THINGS..."

"BOTH, ANDY! I LIKE YOU. I LIKE YOU TOO, PHIL. LET'S BE PAIRS FOR LIFE... AND SEAL IT IN BLOOD..."



"REMEMBER, PHIL? REMEMBER HOW INSEPARABLE WE WERE... PLAYING TOGETHER... GOING PLACES TOGETHER... LAUGHING TOGETHER... TWO OF US AGAINST THE WORLD..."

"YOU ARE BULLET! DON'T EVER PICK ON ME! TELL PHIL AGAIN, GYTHEART!"

"GASP! GASP! I LIKE UP! I PROMISE! GASP UP!"

BO... BO...



"NONE OF THE GIRLS CONSIDERED US, PHIL. THEY CONSIDERED PAIRING CHEAP THRILLS OF DATING AND PETTING WERE AS FARAWAY TO THE PLATONIC IDEAS OF OUR EMBRACE MINDS!"

"I'VE DECIDED ON ANDREWINE, PHIL! WHY DON'T YOU STUDY IT WITH ME?"

"BOBBY ANDY! ELECTRONICS IS MY BEAT!"



"COLLEGE! THE SAME COLLEGE, OF COURSE. NATURALLY, WE COULD NOT BE EXACTLY ALIKE IN ALL THINGS. I PROBED LIFE'S MECHANISMS AND YOU PROBED GOLD LIFELESS CASES. BUT EVEN HERE, WE FOUND COMMON GROUND..."

"IT'S A WELL KNOWN FACT THAT THE BRAIN EMITS ELECTRICAL IMPULSES, PHIL. WHY DO YOU ASK?"

"I WAS JUST WONDERING, ANDY. SUPPOSE WE COULD CAPTURE THOSE IMPULSES AND REDUCE THEM INTO AUDIBLE SOUNDS... ELECTRONICALLY."



"WE USED THAT CLEVER BAGGAGE FOR OUR COMBINED DOCTORATE THESISSES. WE KNOWED 'EM DEAD, DIDN'T WE, PHIL... GRADUATED WITH TOP HONORS."

"CONGRATULATIONS, ANDY! SAME TO YOU, PHIL!"



"AND WE GOT OUT INTO THE WORLD TOGETHER. REMEMBER HOW WE FOUND THOSE TWO OFFICES SIDE BY SIDE? I PURCHASED MY A.D. SPHERE AND YOU HUNG OUT YOUR ELECTRONIC ENGINEER'S SIGN..."

"READY FOR LUNCH, PHIL?"

"ANDREW HOBART LTD."

"I'M IN."

"I'M IN."

"I'M IN."

"I'M IN."

"I'M IN."

"REMEMBER HOW WE WORKED TOGETHER ON YOUR THEORY, PHIL? THE CRAZY MACHINE WE BUILT. REMEMBER THAT LIQUID... HOW WE KEPT IT ALIVE IN THE BRINE WATER... ATTACHING THE ELECTRODES TO ITS HEAD..."



"AND THEN CAME THOSE AWFUL NIGHTS. I STILL SHUDDER AT THE MEMORY, PHIL. I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG. I FELT IT. EVERY EVENING YOU SAW MORE AND MORE MADNESS."

"I CAN'T BELIEVE IF TOMORROW NIGHT, ANDY! SOMETHING CAME UP!"

"SURE, PHIL! I UNDERSTAND."



"YOU STOPPED COMING. FIRST YOU SKIPPED ONE DAY A WEEK, THEN TWO. THEN YOU HARDLY CAME AT ALL. I HAD TO KNOW WHAT..."

"WHAT'S WRONG, PHIL? I CAN FEEL SOMETHING STRANGELY DIFFERENT IN ME! WHAT IS IT? TELL ME! I MUST KNOW!"

"HOW CAN I TELL YOU, ANDY? I... IT ISN'T EASY!"



"YOUR HESITATION, YOUR AVERTED EYES, A COLD CHILL SHRIFFED ME AND I STEELED MYSELF FOR THE SHOCK OF WHAT I COULD ALMOST SUSPECT."

"Eh... I'M IN LOVE ANDY!"

"BO, PHIL..."

"YOU WENT ON, NOT KNOWING HOW EACH WORD WHIPPLASHED MY PLUNCHED SOUL..."

"HER NAME IS JONORA! HERE... HERE'S HER PICTURE! ISN'T SHE PRETTY?"

"VERY... LOVELY, PHIL!"

"I'M BORN TO MARRY HER, ANDY!"

"MARRY? BUT PHIL! OUR... OUR FRIEND - JANE... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU'LL BE BREAKING IT UP..."

"PLEASE, ANDY, DON'T MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A DOLT AFTER ALL I AM SITTING ALONE IN YEARS! I'M ALMOST THIRTY! IT'S NORMAL FOR A MAN MY AGE TO WANT A WIFE... A HOME... JESUS! AND OUR FRIENDSHIP ISN'T BREAKING UP, YOU'LL LIKE JONORA, AND..."

"BO, PHIL? IT WON'T BE THE SAME WITH YOU MARRIED! YOU CAN'T DO IT! LISTEN TO ME..."

"REMEMBER HOW I PLEASED WITH YOU, PHILIP... ARRIVED... RAVAGED... STORMED... BROWBEDED ON BORDER RIDGE..."

"PHIL, YOU CAN'T CANT ABIDE OUR FRIENDSHIP LIKE AN OLD SHOT, IT'S TOO SACRED! MARRIAGE IS FOR OTHERS, NOT FOR US, WITH OUR WEDDED BROTHERS!" PHIL, I MISS OF YOU. *SAVE THIS CREATURE UP!*"

"I'M... SORRY, ANDY..."

"YOU TURNED A STONY HEART TO YOUR OLD FRIEND, PHILIP, AND THEN, ONE DAY, YOU BROUGHT JONORA TO MEET ME. SHE WAS LOVELY, ALL RIGHT, ON THE OUTSIDE! BUT A MENTAL VACUUM INSIDE..."

"THIS IS ANDREW ROBERT, JONORA!"

"SEE, PHILLY'S TOL' ME ALL ABOUT YOU, DOG. HE SAYS YOU'RE REAL SMART."

"YOUR FIANCÉE JONORA - AHOE, JONORA! IT IS PHILIP WHO IS THE SMARTER OF THE TWO OF US!"

"PHILIP! SMART? AH, SMART HE'S EYE MY HAND - SOME ME... AND HE CAN PLAY A NEAR GAME OF TIC-TAC, BUT SMART? REALLY? TEE HOOO! PHILIP YOU SMART!"



"AFTER YOU AND ZONORA LEFT, I
CAUGHT PHILIP. NO, NOT FOR ME AND
MY LONE LINGERIE... BUT FOR FOOL."

"BOB... THAT'S BULLY THAT... BOB...
FELONIES! ALL SHE WANTS OF HIM
IS A PLAYMATE AND A LOVER...
HIS PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES...
WHILE HIS FINE MIND GOES TO
WASTE!"



"WEDDING BELLS TOLLED HAPPY-
MEDIUM FOR FOOL, PHILIP. MURKY
FOR ME. I WAS YOUR BEST MAN,
OF COURSE, BUT NO LONGER YOUR
BEST FRIEND... CLOSEST COMP-
ANION..."



"AND THEN I SAT ALONE, PHILIP.
EVERYDAY AFTER EVERYDAY... LISTENING
TO THAT ANIMAL SCREECH... STARING AT
YOUR EMPTY CHAIR..."



"THOSE BITTER LONELY HOURS, PHILIP... DRAGGING
ME... EACH AN ETERNITY... UNTIL I COULD STAND
IT NO MORE. I WAS READY TO TAKE MY LIFE,
PHILIP... READY TO SLIT MY THROAT WITH ONE OF
MY OWN RAZOR-SHARP SCALPELS, WHEN..."

"THE... ONLY... WAY...
OUT... CHOKE..."



"I FITTED UP MY BASEMENT WITH EQUIPMENT, MADE
MYSELF AN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY... STARTED MY
RESEARCH... LOST MYSELF IN MY WORK..."

"LOMOTOMY HAVE CUT AWAY
WHOLE PORTIONS OF THE BRAIN
THAT WERE GNEARED, ROTTED...
TUMORED. THE PART OF THE BRAIN
THAT WAS LEFT CONTINUED TO
CARRY ON THE BODY PROCESSOR..."



"THAT PHONE CALL SAVED ME, PHILIP. IT ALSO SAVED YOU.
IT WAS THE HOSPITAL. AN EMERGENCY OPERATION. MAJOR
LOMOTOMY. IT WAS WHILE I WAS REMOVING THAT DISEASED
PORTION OF THE PATIENT'S BRAIN THAT IT CAME TO ME..."

"OF COURSE! THE REAL WAY OUT! THE MOST
MORTELLIST, MOST HORRIBLE WAY OUT..."



"...SPENT TWO YEARS TRADING DOWN THE AMBER... AND
THEN I FOUND IT AND MY CHANCE CAME WHEN YOU CALLED
ONE DAY..."

"PHIL, I'M BORED TO HEAR THAT, PAUL! YOU'RE
NOT SONG WITH HER? THEN WHY NOT COME HERE
AND SPEND THE TWO WEEKS WITH ME? GOOD-F^Y
I'LL EXPECT YOU, THEN! GOOD-BYE..."



'THAT WAS A BREAK, WASN'T IT, PHILIP? JONERA HAVING TO GO HOME FOR TWO WEEKS DUE TO AN ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY? IT CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME. I WAS BORED...'

'YOUR MOVE,
ABORT! HER,
HER. JUST
LIKE OLD
TIMES, EH?

'...I SEE THE
SAFETY, PHIL!
YOUR MARRIAGE
IS FALLOUNED ON YOUR
JONERA. SICKENS
YOU, DOESN'T
SHE? ...'

'REMEMBER HOW YOU TURNED ON
ME, ABORTIVE?'

'ARE YOU MAD, ABORT? WHERE DID
YOU GET SUCH A CRAZY IDEA?
I LOVE HER, EVEN IF SHE ISN'T
SO BRILLIANT! SHE'S FUN, MIGHT
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY...'

'POOR LOYAL PHILIP! YOU DON'T
WANT TO HURT HER, DO YOU? YOU
DON'T WANT TO CAST HER AWAY
LIKE THE TRASH SHE WAS FOR
BASTING YOUR LIFE... SUFFOCATE
THAT WONDERFUL MIND IN
SILENT TRAUMAS, WELL,
YOU DON'T POOL ME, PHILIP. I
HATED YOU, FROM THE BOTTOM
OF MY HEART...'

'AND I HATE YOU, ABORTIVE, AS ONE FRIEND TO
ANOTHER...'

'IF YOU KEEP UP WITH THAT WOMAN...
LET HER DRAWS YOU DOWN TO HER
MORNING DEPTHS... YOU WILL BE
DEGRADING YOURSELF!'

'STOP IT,
ABORT! THAT'S
ENOUGH!
EITHER WE
DROP THE
SUBJECT OR...'

'TOO BAD, PHILIP! TOO BAD YOU WERE SO STUBBORN!
IF I'D ONLY CONVINCED YOU...'

'ALL ABORT, PHILIP! NO NEED
TO GET ANGRY! THE
SUBJECT IS CLOSED!'

'YOU MENTIONED
SOMETHING ABOUT
SOME EXPERIMENTS
YOU'VE BEEN DOING,
ABORT!'

'OH, YES! COME ALONG!
I'VE SET UP A LABORATORY
IN THE CELLAR.
THIS WAY...'

'WHY, YOU'VE GOT A GREAT DEAL
OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
DOWN THERE, ABORT! DON'T TELL
ME YOU'RE HAVING IN ON
MY PROJECT! ...'

'NO, PHILIP! I'VE BEEN WORKING ON
THEORIES RELATING TO BRAIN SURGERY,
SILENTLY. IN FACT... EH ABOUT READY
TO PERFORM MY FIRST SEVENTY-
FIVE PERCENT LAMBOTOMY...'

'ALL YOU
NEED IS
THE
PATIENT,
EH, ABORT?'

DOCTOR HOBART LOOKED UP, HIS DREAMY THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT BY THE SHARP HAMMERING ON THE DOOR...

OH, BLAST! I FORGOT! IT'S THURSDAY! THEY'RE HERE FOR THEIR WEEKLY VISIT!



DOCTOR HOBART STEPPED OUT THROUGH THE SLICING DOORS OF THE LIBRARY, TURNING TO CLOSE THEM.

I'LL BE BACK IN AS SOON AS THEY'VE GONE, PHILIP! THEN WE CAN CONTINUE OUR GAME!



THE LIBRARY DOORS LOCKED, ANDREW HUNG OVER THE FRONT DOOR...

MR... PHILIP! JORDANRA! COME IN! COME IN! WE CAN'T STAY LONG. OH, TONIGHT, GAWD, YEAH... WE DEARTH. I MEAN... ANDREW! MR. GANTY!



DOCTOR HOBART LED HIS GUESTS PAST THE LIBRARY INTO THE SITTING ROOM...

JOHN DANCING AGAIN, PHILIP? AREN'T YOU GETTING A LITTLE OLD FOR THAT?

HUH! THANKS, WE ENJOY DANCING... DON'T WE, JORDANRA? LET'S GET DANCING...



IT WAS A DULL, BORING VISIT WITH JORDANRA SOVINGLY IMPATIENT TO GO, AND PHIL DOING LITTLE TO CARRY ON ANY CONVERSATION. THIS IS THE WAY IT'S BEEN EVERY WEEK FOR TWENTY YEARS...

WELL, WE REALLY MUST BE GOING! COME ALONE, PHILIP!

HUH? OH, TEAR ME, AIN'T SEE YOU...

OF COURSE, PHILIP! NEXT WEEK! GOOD-BYE...



DOCTOR HOBART LED THEM TO THE FRONT DOOR, WATCHED THEM HURRY DOWN THE WALK TO THEIR WAITING CAR...



THEN HE UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND WENT INTO THE LIBRARY...

YOU KNOW, PHILIP, I DON'T THINK JORDANRA NOTICED THE LEAST DIFFERENCE WHEN SHE CAME HOME FROM THAT VISIT TO HER FAMILY TWENTY YEARS AGO. SHE'S STILL HAS THE THINGS SHE WANTS OF HER HUSBAND, THE PHYSICAL THINGS. SHE'S PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH YOUR BODY, AND...



... AND TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF YOUR BRAIN. AND I'VE GOT THE REAL YOU, PHILIP... THE IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR BRAIN... YOUR CREATIVE ARTISTIC PART.



THE BRAIN FLOATED LAZILY IN THE JAR OF AMBER LIQUID...

AND SO THE FEARS STRETCH HAPPILY AHEAD OF US, PHILIP! YOU AND I... TOGETHER TILL DEATH... IN MINDFUL COMPANIONSHIP.



DOCTOR HOBART FLIPPED ON THE VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT EVENING... AND TURNED THE VOLUME...

ALL RIGHT, PHILIP! SO AHEAD! RAY AND RAYE!

OH, BODY WHY DID YOU DO IT? RAYE I LOVED RAYE AND RAYE!



DOCTOR HOBART SHOOK HIS HEAD, SMILING WARMLY AT THE BRAIN SUSPENDED IN THE BUBBLING LIQUID...

OH, DON'T BE A FOOL, PHILIP! WHY MUST WE ALWAYS BE THROWN FAIR... EVERY NIGHT... BEFORE WE CAN SETTLE DOWN TO A NICE QUIET EVENING? I DID THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! I RESCUED YOU FROM THAT INSTANT FEMALE. WHY, IF YOU HAD BEEN ON LIVING WITH HER FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS...



...YOU WOULD HAVE LOST YOUR MIND!



DOCTOR HOBART REACHED FOR THE VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH. THE BRAIN SEEMED TO TWIST BLIGHTLY AS IT FLOATED INOCULATLY IN THE JAR...

MUST I TURN YOU OFF, PHILIP, OR WILL YOU BE GOOD SO WE CAN GO ON WITH OUR GAME? HUH... I BELIEVE IT'S MY MOVE!

HOH! WE STOPPED LAST NIGHT AFTER YOUR MOVE! IT'S MY MOVE...



HEH, HEH! WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT A BEDDING OF MONSTERS? CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE THE MAD DOCTOR AND HIS BOTTLED BRAIN ARE MARRIED. LISTEN TO THEM ARKIE LEAGUE WHO GOES FIRST AND POWELL ARKIE ABOUT WHO GOES FIRST... TO WHOM THE E.G. PARADES... THAT IS... WHEN YOU SEE THE SHIFT YOU CAN SEE, LIKE BACK ISSUES...

WHICH YOU WRITE US FOR ORDERING INFO. HUH, THE MAZE-KEEPER ARRIVED WITH A FARM TO DRIVE ALL YOU MANAGERS SANE. I'LL SEE YOU LATER!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HERCULES AND NOW THAT ERIC HAS DRILLED YOUR BLOOD WITH HIS CRYPT GAPER, IT'S TIME FOR US TO PRESENT IT! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOOT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A VISIT TO AN INSANE ASYLUM. I CALL THIS MAD CLUESTORY, THIS TALE OF PARKINSON IN THE BODY-HATCH...

COME BACK, LITTLE LINDA!

THE OLD MAN SAT IN THE DAMP DARKNESS OF HIS TATTERED ASYLUM CELL, DOBBING QUIETLY. HE SAT WITH WIDE STARING EYES AND CLENCHED FISTS AMID THE FOUL ODOR OF DECAY AND ROT AND UNREMOVED HUMAN EXCRETMENTS. AND HIS CALLED FOR LITTLE LINDA...

LINDA! LINDA! COME BACK TO ME, LINDA...



DOCTOR MORSEAN ULLMAR, THE DIRECTOR OF THE COUNTY INSANE ASYLUM, WALKED SLOWLY THROUGH THE DARK DRIM PASSAGeway LINED ON EITHER SIDE WITH ANCIENT OAKEN SURGEON DOORS. AND THERE WAS A FAINT SMILE ON HIS HARD COLD FACE. HIS ASSISTANT, ERIC HADEN, FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND.

IT WAS A STROKE OF BRILLIANCE, ERIC, MAKING USE OF THESE OLD SURGEON CELLS. DID I EVER THANK YOU FOR RIVING ME THE IDEA?

THE MONEY YOU PAY ME IS FAIRLY ENOUGH, DOCTOR ULLMAR!



DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT ONE OF THE METAL DOORS. HE SELECTED A KEY FROM THE RING HE CARRIED.

WELL, THE MONEY'S PAY YOU IS THE LEAST I CAN DO, ERIC. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, ERIC?

THE DOCTOR INSERTED THE KEY INTO THE LOCK AND TWISTED. THE BOLT SNAPPED OPEN. THE DOCTOR LAUGHED...

TWO YEARS, BUT IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE WE EMPTIED THE HABITATION AND HERDED ALL THE HABITANTS INTO THESE DUNGEON CELLS!

YES, BUT TWO YEARS...

THE DOCTOR TURNED TO ERIC, WHO TOWERED OVER HIM, TALL AND STRONG AND MUSCULAR...

DO YOU REALIZE HOW MANY HABITANTS WE DIDN'T HAVE A LOT TO DO IN TWO YEARS, ERIC? HOW MANY BLANKETS...



THE DOCTOR PUSHED OPEN THE RUSTING METAL DOOR...

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE'VE RAISED ON LAST NIGHT... CLEANING... FOOD...

QUITE A LOT, MR...

THE OLD MAN SAT IN THE DAMP DARKNESS OF HIS CELL... BREATHING SOFTLY...

LIMON! WHERE DID YOU GO, LIMON? LIMON...?

YOU SAY HE CALLED THAT NAME DOWNTOWN...

ALMOST THE TIME...



THE DOCTOR SHOOK THE OLD MAN. THE OLD MAN TURNED WITH WIDE STARING EYES...

WHO IS LIMON, YOU OLD FOOL?

LIMON! LIMON! LIMON IS MY LOVE!

PROBABLY SOMEONE IN HIS PAST, DOCTOR!



THE DOCTOR INHALED THE RUSTEATING ODOR OF THE DARK CELL, AND RETCHED...

LIMON, MY LOVE! COME TO ME!

ERIK! CHOKED... PROBABLY LITTLE... SIR... GET OUT OF HERE. HE'S BEYOND HELP!

WE'LL OUGHT TO CLEAN THESE CELLS OUT, DOCTOR... BEFORE AN EPIDEMIC BREAKS OUT...



THEY SLAMMED THE CELL DOOR SHUT AND MOVED BACK UP THE CORRIDOR...

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, ERIC! A DEAD INMATE MEANS WE LOSE HIS ALLOTMENT, AND WE DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN, DO WE? I'LL HAVE TO HIRE ANYBODY...



...UP THE WINDING STONE STEPS LEADING TO THE ASYLUM BUILDINGS ABOVE...

YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT BEING ECONOMICAL, ERIC. I'M PROUD OF YOU. EVERY DOLLAR SAVED MEANS FORTY CENTS FOR ME! WHY SHOULDN'T I BE?



...AND OUT THROUGH THE DESERTED MUSIY MAIL, DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT A FILTHY WINDOW, LOOKING OUT...

IT'S TIME TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS, ERIC. WE WANT EVERYBODY DOWN THERE TO THINK THE BUSES ARE STILL OCCUPIED...



FAR BELOW THE BLEAK GREY INNED A STYLIN' DOWNTOWN IN THE VALLEY, LIGHTS BLINKED ON AS TWILIGHT TURNED TO NIGHT. THE PEOPLE IN THEIR CLEAN WHITE HOUSES SAT AT CLEAN WHITE TABLES AND ATE FROM CLEAN WHITE DISHES AND NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS GOING ON ABOVE THEM...



THEY NEVER HEARD THE ANGUISHED SCREAMS OF THE INMATES IN THEIR FILTHY STINKIN' DUNGEON CELLS... NEVER FELT THE EDGE OF ERIC'S WHIP...



THEY NEVER TASTED THE DISH WATER SOUP... THE SPILLED SLIP MEAT... THAT WAS FEED TO THE PRINTER. WHAT HAPPENED ERIC? HE COMPLAINED, BOB. WHY DID YOU HAVE TO WHIP HIM?



OH MY WELL, IF HE DOESN'T LIKE WHAT WE SERVE HIM, DON'T GIVE HIM ANY FOR A WHILE. WE'LL APPRECIATE IT, AFTER SAY... THREE DAYS!

NO, NO! PLEASE...

...I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY... BOB. I'M SORRY...



NO, THE PEOPLE IN THE CLEAN WHITE
VALLEY TOWN NEVER HEARD THE SAD
MOURNFUL WAILS OF THE OLD MAN...
CRYING FOR HIS LOVED ONE...

I FOUND LYNN... IF THEY
DON'T LET ME IN! WE'RE ONLY
ALL LIKE
HIM, EH, DOCT?

YES! WE WOULDN'T
HAVE ANY TROUBLE
IF THEY WERE ALL
AS HARMLESS
AND AS HELPLESS
AS HIM...

OH, I
ALMOST
FORGOT!
THIS GAME
FOR YOU
TODAY!

ERIC HANDED DOCTOR ULLMAN THE
VERY OFFICIAL LOOKING ENVELOPE...

WHAT IS IT,
DOC? YOU'RE
WRITTEN AS A
ENDST?

IT'S FROM THE
STATE BOARD OF
HOSPITALS.
THEY'RE ARRIVING
TOMORROW FOR AN
INSPECTION TOUR...

A, CHILL CRAWLED UP DOCTOR ULLMAN'S ARM, IF THE
STATE BOARD DISCOVERED WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE
ASYLUM, HE AND ERIC WOULD BE THROWN INTO JAIL...

WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THE PATIENTS
BACK UPSTAIRS... GET CLEAN
SHEETS FOR THE JUDGE... SCRUB
THE BARRS TILL THEY SHINE.
HURRY, YOU IDIOT!

Y-YES,
DOCTOR
ULLMAN!

THE TWO MEN SCRAMBLED DOWN THE PASSAGeway, UNLOCKING THE METAL BURMECH DOORS, FLINGING THEM WIDE,
SCREAMING AIRILY AT THE COMPTON INMATES WHO
BLINKED AT THEM IN TERROR...

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET
UPSTAIRS ON THE
SQUEEZE, BUT MOVE IT!
THERE'S WORK TO DO!

C'MON, OLD MAN,
GET OUT OF YOUR
CELL! OUT, I
SAID...

THE INMATES WERE HERDED INTO THE PASSAGeway,
AND MARCHED UP INTO THE HALLS THAT HAD LAIN
DESPOTIC AND EMPTY FOR TWO YEARS...

IF ANDY LYNN'S WILL
BE COMING... I DON'T
WANT TO SEE HIM!
LYNN...

HE'S GIVING ME
TROUBLE, ME
DOC. THAT'S
WHAT'S UP.

DOCTOR ULLMAN SWUNG THE HEAVY LEATHER WHIP... LASHING
OUT AT THE OLD MAN...

UPSTAIRS, I SAID!
UPSTAIRS!

NOT IF I WANT
MY LYNN'S I WANT.

Y-I-I-I-I-I-I-

ALL RIGHT LONG, IN THE MARCH, THE STINKING WHIP-ROSE AND PELL, UNTIL THE WAITING INMATES ON...

SCRUB THE WINDOWS...
WASH DOWN THE FLOORS...
POLISH THE BEDS...
I WANT EVERYTHING
SPOTLESS! WE'RE BEING
INSPECTED TOMORROW!



MASSIE WE OUGHT
TO PUT 'EM BACK
DOWN THERE...
IN THE
DORMITORY!

NO! WE CAN'T
AFFORD IT
THEY MAY COUNT
A COUNT!



BUT HE COULD CAUSE
TROUBLE! HIM
AND HIS STUPID
LINDA! MAYBE
HE'LL TALK!
MAYBE HE'LL TELL
THEM WHERE HE'S
BEEN KEPT FOR
TWO TEARS!



ALL THE POOR ASYLUM PATIENTS SCURRIED ABOUT WITH
PAILS AND MOPS AND POLISHING CLOTHES... CLEANING THE
LONG-ABANDONED HALLS. ALL, THAT IS, EXCEPT THE OLD
MAN WHO SAT IN A CORNER SOBBING SOFTLY...

LINDA! I WANT MY LINDA!
THEY WON'T LET ME
SEE MY LINDA!
WHY YOU...
LET HIM
ALONE, ERIC!



DOCTOR ULLMAN TURNED TO THE
OTHER INMATES. HE ENRAGED THE
SHIP...

ONE WORD... ONE HINT FROM
ANY OF YOU THAT YOU'VE BEEN
MISTREATED IN THE SLIGHTEST
DEGREE... AND YOU'LL REGRET IT.



THE INMATES COVERED IN FEAR AND TERROR. THERE WAS
UNDERSTANING IN THEIR EYES. EACH ONE OF THEM
KNEW THAT THE DOCTOR MEANT BUSINESS. THERE WOULD
BE NO SLIPS OF THE TONGUE, FROM ANY OF THEM...

I-SEE,
DOCTOR!
B-WE WON'T SAY
A WORD!
NOT A
WORD!
ALL RIGHT!
NOW GET BACK
TO YOUR WORK!



ONLY THE OLD MAN, OBVIOUSLY TO EVERYTHING, CON-
TINUED TO SQUEEZE...

I WANT MY LINDA!
I WANT MY...

YAAAAAHHHHHH...

SHUT UP,
YOU OLD FOOL...

LEAVE HIM
ALONE,



IN THE MORNING, THE WARDS WERE SPARKLING CLEAN. EACH BED WAS MADE WITH FRESH CLEAN SHEETS AND SPOTLESS BLANKETS. THE INMATES HAD ALL BEEN BATHED AND DRESSED IN NEW UNIFORM. EVERYTHING WAS READY FOR THE BOARD'S INSPECTION. AND THEN...



THEY MOVED THROUGH THE ASYLUM, SERIOUS-FACED, CRITICAL-MINDED, EYING EVERYTHING...

YOUR LETTER CAME SO LATE, GENTLEMEN. I HAD NO TIME TO... PREPARE. YOU'LL HAVE TO ACCEPT THE PLACE AS IT IS!

THAT WAS THE REA, DR. ULLMAN HUMMING?



THEY NOTED THE TEMPTING ODORS DRIFTING FROM THE KITCHEN... THE SLEMMING BRAISE OF THE BEDS... THE IMMACULATE CONDITION OF THE WARDS...

YOU MUST BE CONGRATULATED, DR. ULLMAN. THE ASYLUM SEEMS TO BE EXTREMELY WELL RUN AND THE PATIENTS AWAKE.

ASK THEM, SIR?



THEY WENT FROM BED TO BED... TALKING TO THE INMATES... INQUIRING...

HOW IS THE FOOD? ARE YOU F-REE, SIR? HAVE YOU HAD ANY COMPLAINTS?

OH, YES...

WELL, PRETTY...

MR. SIR,

HAD ANY COMPLAINTS?



SUDDENLY THE WARD REVERBERATED WITH AN ANNOYED CRY...



THE OLD MAN SAT UP STAMING WILDLY...



HE CLIMBED FROM HIS BED...



THE OLD MAN HAMMERED ADOWN
THE DOOR...DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO
THE CELLAR DOOR...



...DOWN THE WINDING STONE STAIRS.
THE ROOMS CALLED UP...



SEE THE NEW DARK PLANETARY



THE BOARD MEMBERS PEERED INTO THE CELL, WHILE THE OLD MAN SAT DOOMING HAPPILY. THEY SHIFTED. THEY SAT. THE TELL-TALE SIGN... SMELLED. THE TELL-TALE DOOR.



BEHIND THEM, THE OTHER THIRTEEN WERE COMING DOWN THE STONE STEPS, MARCHING ALONG THE PASSAGeway, FILED INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE DUNGEON CELLS.



THE BOARD MEMBER MENTIONED TO THE OLD MAN'S CELL, OR ULLMAN LOOKED, THEN PAULET, HE WAS IN THERE ALL RIGHT...COOKING AT LINEAL, WITH SPLENDID MARKS OF DISGUSTMENT TO HIS LEFT.



GOOD LONG
TIME.

HEH, HEH! WELL, WOKE! THERE'S A
FOUNDERING LITTLE TALE OF DEVOTION,
AND SO TRULY, TOO, WHAT WITH ST.
VALENTINE'S DAY JUST AROUND THE
CORNER, NOW, I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO
D.E., WHO'S GOT A CURIOUS FARM TO TELL
AT YOU. OH, BY THE WAY, IF ANY OF YOU
WANT TO KNOW



WHAT **ADVENTURES**
ARE IN STORE FOR
YOU, IF YOU'D LIKE
TO FIND OUT
WHETHER YOU'RE
GOING TO DIE
VIOLENTLY OR
NOT, JUST VISIT AN
ASTROLOGER **HERE**
OF NAME. HE
SPECIALIZES IN
HOOROSCOPES
BY E. HOWE



HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Renee Cochran

Dear Crypt,

I love your comics and your taste of words. I am a very guttural fan of your comics. I love CRYPT #10, "Ghosts For Honor". People should not let little kids work because it just drives them crazy. They seem to make up stories of who really did their killing.

Keep printing your stories. You have a very horror-hungry fan club out here. It's ok to print my address and zip code. I'm dying for a get-buster pal.

Orlando Garcia

529 W Superior St
Chicago, IL 60622

May I suggest a fruse?

—OK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Hi! It's Shawn again. I have almost all your comics. All I need is 8 more. Anyway, how are you? I wanted to ask you something. Why is your show not on anymore? I am very disappointed.

My brother threw a party when he heard you weren't on anymore, and I got a huge poster of the HBO version of you. You're the last thing I see before I go to sleep! Well, I gotta go.

Shawn Van Dijk

Philadelphia, PA

This is your late brother I promised.

—OK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

It is in fact, each issue of your comic covers. Before diving on this one, #24, I realized it represented 3.12% of the anthology.

On page 5 of "Food for Thought", there is an invisible robe that Merta slips on. Perhaps it's the emperor's new robe? You know, at the turn of page 7, I figured Merta was targeted for the final twist instead of Cast.

In "Pearly to Deed", I guess Larry finally had his fill of Phil.

Bob Gorby

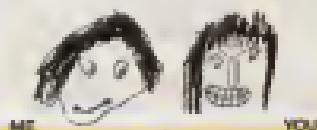
Camarillo, CA

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I have two dozen comics and a toy of you.

Jesse Lovelace

Anchorage, AK



I have two dozen comics and a toy of you! I'm a lucky dog!

—OK

Re "The Crypt-Keeper's Corner"

Re issue #24: "Food for Thought" page 7 panel 2, who is Merta? It is Merta in the other 47 panels.

The caption on panel 8 page 4 of the story "Pearly to Deed" reads: "They both live in love with her...". Who missed the "D" key on the typewriter?

It's quite a coincidence that in 1954 OK used the word "Titanic" in the intro to the story "Prairie Schooner", because in 1996 that word is the talk of the land.

In "Half-Baked" The Old Witch says that membership in the EC Fanclub Club is limited to 200,000,000 people. That's about the entire population of the United States, that's a lot of Addicts! It's a nationwide epidemic!

David Dillano

Kensington, CT

Let's slip you into a buried box and check YOUR association, David-baby! The "Titanic" disaster was common enough in the popular mind for the first 80 years, imagine if our reprint of WEIRD SCIENCE #1 had appeared in the last six months!

—OK

Dear OK

"Undertaking Phil", #24, seems to touch on a lot of taboo subjects for a 50s comic: death and its consequences in the form of the moribund, murder of innocents by an unscrupulous dropplet in collusion with the mortician, a thief's loss of a partner, and the subsequent revenging by a group of kids on the evil government (defying authority in the process) and, finally, violent assault and murder in a graveyard. The kids witnessing the graveyard murder is straight out of HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Quite an intricate plot for a "lowbrow" comic book!

How original (and typical) of EC to have a story narrated by a grave ("The Crying Grave")! This is one of the traits that put EC above all others in its day, and continues to do so even today.

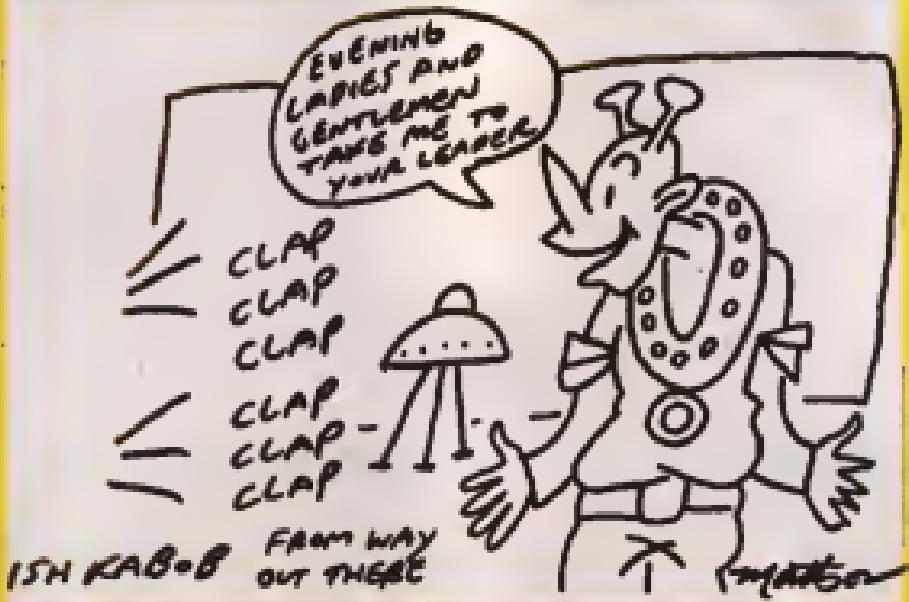
EC's retelling of "The Sleeping Beauty" result, result, arrives a tried old fairy tale with snappy lingo and a Transylvanian twist.

Berry McCollum

Alton, IL

I wondered "whatever happened to my Transylvanian Twist?"

—OK



When the Phlebian COLLEGE OF PLUTONIC KNOWLEDGE show ended with the retirement of Senatorial Cy Cullen, his entourage dispersed to the eight corners of the solar system to start new careers. Our luck, we got left it does explain much about the career of Jerry Lewis, however. (Showbiz beat from Frank Trachte's People) Matteson, Spring City, PA, to start THE CRYPT-KEEPERS PAGE ON . . .

Morpheus War, Morpheus Brown, Morpheus Bed, Mrs. Morpheus's Chamber; all need love to . . .

Morpheus's Love

Mood like the weather, sultry, searing. Spots rumored vampire, strolls on, peering. Sound of a victim, waiting fire. Besides this Dark One, keen to die.

"Some say you're evil," comes her greeting. "People will say things," her eyes meeting. Fondering in eyes hypnagogic, She fails to charms more than hypnotic.

Buries his canines, gnashing, keen. Shape from her jugular, least unseen. Vampire-like eyes, grasping, glowing. Blood of the victim, ebbing, flowing.

Tooth of the vampire, like unhook; A kiss for the living who's. Death to the maiden, now undied. Bridge of a monster with earthy bed.

Shuddering transition, metamorphic. Resuscitation, grave-syphonic. "Will come," he says, "to my Necrology" But she proves to be a prodigie.

She grabs his cloak, gives him a smack. Buries his neck and bites his back.

As I recover from surgery, here's a candidate for the Fine Arts Page. Please print address.

R.C. Gentry, 277796

15155 Sunny LN
Camarillo, CA 93010

FINE ARTS



Here's a weirdo: I go into the crypt to tell them, Brian Goss, Westham, MA, comes out of the grave to read them. Is there any way to cut out the middleman (you can see my point)? —OK

Send your confite but returnable, not too long, not too big, highly developed but also bold black art. Warnings are OK.

THE CRYPT-KEEPERS
PAGE OF FINE ARTS

I CALL THIS ELECTRIFYING YARN...

CURRENT ATTRACTION



ABE HAD CROPPED UP ON OLD RUPEE AND STIFFENED HIS JOINTS AND BLACKENED HIS MUSCLES AND FINALLY HE'D BEEN FORCED TO CLIMB DOWN FROM THE FLYING TRAPEZE WHERE FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HE'D REIGNED AS KING. NO MORE WOULD THE BAND PLAY AND THE DRUMS ROLL, AND THE AUDIE HORN BEEP AS THE SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWED HIM ACROSS THE BIG TOP IN HIS DEATH-DEFTING AERIAL ACT. HE WAS A WAS-BEEN...A FORGOTTEN NAME...A FADED STAR. HIS PERFORMING DAYS WERE OVER. BUT THE CIRCUS WAS IN OLD RUPEE'S BLOOD. IT WAS HIS LIFE, AND SO HE'D STAYED ON...WATCHING THE ANIMALS, HELPING THE ROULETTEBOYS, DOING ANY GODD JOB AVAILABLE...JUST SO HE COULD BE NEAR THE SPARKLES AND THE TAMBORIN AND THE GAYNE WORLD HE LOVED. AND THEN THERE WAS JEAN...RUPEE'S DAUGHTER. THERE WAS JEAN'S FUTURE TO CONSIDER...

"HONEY, CANDY! HOW HOW HOW HOW YET? YOU HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH PRETTY PUFFY PUFFY SET UP THERE... HUNTER..."



JEAN HAD BEEN TEN WHEN HER MOTHER HAD MURKED HER DOUBLE FORWARD SUMMERSault AND COME CRASHING DOWN TO THE BIG TOP FLOOR...LEAVING JEAN AN ORPHAN AND RUPEE A WIDOWER. THAT HAD BEEN EIGHT YEARS AGO...

"THAT'S IT, HONEY! THAT'S IT! REMEMBER THAT TIME THIS TIME WHEN YOU SWUNG..."

"HERE... SOON."



OLD RUPEE FINGERED THE MET-POLE NERVOUSLY AS IF HE WERE AFRAID IT MIGHT SUDDENLY WINK, LEAVING HIS PRECIOUS DAUGHTER SWINGING ALONE UP THERE WITHOUT ITS LIFE-PRESERVING PROTECTION...



FOR A MOMENT OLD RUPE'S HEART STOPPED BEAT-
ING AS HE WATCHED HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER'S BODY
FLAIL, THEN PLUNGE DOWNWARD. IT WAS AN OLD
MEMORY, ONE THAT HE WOULD NEVER FORGET.

IT'S ALL RIGHT,
HONEY! RELAX! RELAX
WHEN YOU HIT!

JENN ROBBED AS SHE CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE NET AND
REACHED FOR THE CAPE HER FATHER HELD OUT FOR HER...

I'LL... I'LL NEVER BE ANY
GOOD, DADDY! NEVER! DON'T
WHY DON'T WE GIVE UP?

YOU'LL DO IT, HONEY!
YOU'LL SEE! YOU'LL
BE A STAR SOMEDAY!



THEY WALKED IN SILENCE ACROSS
THE TAMBUR FLOOR, DOWN BETWEEN
THE SEATS, AND OUT INTO THE BURN-
LIGHT...

OH, DADDY!
YOU ARE! I
HAVE BEEN
LOOKING ALL
OVER FOR
YOU!

OH, DADDY!
IT'S ENRICO! DADDY!
AND MY EYES
ARE ALL RED!

A TALL, HANDSOME DARK-EYED MAN
CAME STRIDING ACROSS THE
STAIRCASE, SWINGING BROADLY...
BO! I MEET YOU
HAD BEEN PROD-
LING, LOVELY
ONE! THAT IS
GOOD!

I'LL... YOU'LL
HAVE BEEN PROD-
LING, LOVELY
ONE! THAT IS
GOOD!

DON'T TALK! OH, ENRICO!
THAT WAY! THIS IS
WHY, WHEN I
SAYED, EVERYBODY
YOUR MOTHER
CALLED HIM
"RUPE!"

A PLEASE-
HAVE TO
MEET THE
FATHER
OF SUCH A
CHARM-
ING GIRL.
MR... EN-
RUPE!



THEY STUDIED THE BURNT-LOOKING STRANGER.

YOU'RE NEW
AROUND HERE,
AREN'T YOU?
WHAT'S YOUR
ACT?

ENRICO IS A STAR, DADDY!
HE USUALLY BETS TOP
BILLION! HE JUST
JOINED OUR CIRCUS
YESTERDAY! HE'S
A KOMPE-THROWER!

EALOZ
THREW
THE
MAGNETE
AND THE
CLEAVER.

ENRICO TURNED TO JENN.

I WILL SEE YOU LATER,
MOM... AS WE PLANNED.
AU REVÉ!

ALL RIGHT,
ENRICO! BYE,
FOR NOW!



OLD RUPE AND HIS DAUGHTER
WALKED ON IN SILENCE UNTIL THEY
CAME TO THEIR TRAILER. THEN...

I DON'T LIKE
HIM! HE'S A
BREAST-LOOKIN'
CHARACTER!
HE'S VERY
SWEET, DADDY...
AND VERY
MINDLESS—
I FEED HIS
WIFE...



OLD RUPE SPIN AROUND...

HIS WIFE IF HE'S
MARRIED? OH, YOU'VE
WIFE IS HIS
FATHER IN
THE ACT! SHE
STANDS UP
ABREAST A
BOARD AND
HE...



I'LL NOT HAVE
MY DAUGHTER
GOING OUT
WITH A MAR-
RIED MAN!



DON'T BE SALLY,
DADDY! WE'RE
JUST FRIENDS!
NOTHING MORE.
YOU'VE GOTTA
HAPPY!

THAT NIGHT, RUPE CAUGHT ENRICO'S ACT. IT WAS QUITE ROMANTICAL. HIS WIFE WOULD STAND SPREAD-EAGLED BEFORE A BOARD AND HE'D COOLLY KNOCK HER WITH KNUCKLES, THROWING THEM IN RAPID SUCCESSION, ENDING UP WITH A CLEAVIN BLAMMING IN TO THE WOOD BEHIND HER HEAD...



THAT'S JUST IT, DADDY!
THEY DON'T GET ALONG!
HE'S NOT IN LOVE
WITH HER ANY LONGER.
BUT SHE REFUSES TO
GIVE HIM A DIVORCE!



AND YOU MEAN
TO TELL ME
SHE LETS HIM
STAND THERE
AND THROW
KNUCKLES AT
HER?

ISN'T SHE HORRIBLE?
ENRICO IS A NERVOUS
WIMB! HE DOESN'T WANT
TO HARM A HAIR ON HER
HEAD. THAT MAKES IT ALL
THE MORE DIFFICULT
FOR HIM!

HOW COME YOU'RE
SO INTERESTED IN
HIS PRIVATE LIFE?



... I THINK I'M
IN LOVE WITH ENRICO,
DADDY!



BUZZOFF! I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM! DON'T
BE A FOOL, JEAN! YOU'RE TOO
YOUNG! WHAT ABOUT YOUR CAREER?
IN ANOTHER FEW MONTHS, THIS ACT
WILL BE BE FAME. YOU'LL BE ON FOUR
WALLS! LOVE ISN'T FOR FOOL! NOT
NOW!

Jean shook her head...

I'M SORRY, DADDY! I CAN'T JUST TURN MY HEART OFF LIKE A RADIO! WHEN IT HAPPENS, IT HAPPENS! AND YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

YOU CAN AVOID LETTING IT HAPPEN! YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT!

Jean bawled at her father and started off across the circus grounds...

IT'S TOO LATE, JEAN! COME DADDY! IT'S ALREADY HAPPENED!



He could see them in the moonlight, meeting and walking off... arm in arm... his daughter, and Enrico...

NO, JEAN! NO! I WON'T LET YOU RUIN YOUR LIFE! I'VE WORRIED TOO LONG AND TOO HARD WITH YOU TO LET YOU THROW IT AWAY!



That night, Old Rufe tried to wait up for his daughter to come home. He remembered the clock hands pointing to three before he dozed off. And when he awoke, it was morning, and Jean was sleeping soundly...

THIS CANNOT GO ON! IT'S UNHAPPY! I'VE GOT TO TALK TO HIM...



Rufe dressed hurriedly and hurried across the circus grounds to the trailer marked 'THE GREAT ENRICO'. He hammered on the door.

PEAKY! WHAT DO YOU... YOUR HUSBAND... YOU WANT... I WANT TO SEE HIM... ALONE!



Enrico's wife was a tired-eyed bleached blonde who reeked of liquor. She stepped out of the trailer and snarled...

BURE, OLD MAN! ONLY YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL-THANK YOU!



Old Rufe leaned over the shoring Enrico and shook him roughly...

HUH? WHO... WHAT... TIME... WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT MY DAUGHTER! I WANT YOU TO LEAVE HER ALONE!



THE GREAT ENRICO STRODE ABOUT THE TRAILER IN A FLAUNT LOUNGING, ROLL PUTTING ON A LONG CIGARETTE HOLDER, LISTENING TO OLD RUPE PLEAD WITH HER...

SHE IS YOUNG... SHE IS
PERFECTED, SHE HAS
HER WHOLE LIFE AHEAD
OF HER, I TELL YOU. I CANNOT
GIVE UP
YOUR
DAUGHTER!



ENRICO SMILED...

I FIND HER
TOO ATTRACTIVE!

...I'M
WARNING
YOU, RUPE!



DO NOT THREATEN ME, I TELL YOU. OLD RUPE, IF YOUR DAUGHTER I ASKED AND I CANNOT FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER, THEN IT SHALL BE WITHOUT THEM! GOOD DAY!



OLD RUPE LEFT ENRICO'S TRAILER AND STAMPED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUND, JUMPING. HE CAME INTO THE BIG TOP, HIS MIND WHIRLING...

I CAN'T LET HIM BREED MY
JEANNIE! I LIVE! I'VE GOT
TO GET RID OF HIM! I'VE...



THE BOARD THAT THE GREAT ENRICO USED IN HIS ACT STOOD IN ITS POSITION IN THE CENTER RING, READY FOR THE NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE. OLD RUPE STUDIED ITS PINTED AND SCARRED SURFACE...

HMMPH! YOU CAN ALMOST OUTLINE
THE SILHOUETTE OF ENRICO'S WIFE
FROM ALL THESE ENRICO MARKS AND
THE CLEANER MARK IS... IT...



ENRICO'S VOICE RANG IN OLD RUPE'S EAR...

I FIND HER... TOO
ATTRACTIVE!

OF COURSE THAT'S
IF ATTRACTION!
THAT'S IT!



OLD RUPE LET HIMSELF INTO THE ELECTRICIAN'S SHED WITHOUT BEING SEEN. HE DRUNKENLY WENT TO HURKLE.

EVERYONE KNOWS ENRICO NO
LONGER LOVES HIS WIFE.
EVERYONE KNOWS SHE WON'T
GIVE HIM A DIVORCE. SO...
WHAT BETTER WAY TO GET
RID OF HER...



RUFU CARRIED THE COIL OF FIRE COPPER WIRE AND THE BAR OF SOFT IRON BACK TO THE BIG TOP. . .

TONIGHT...TODAY! ERICKO THROWS THE CLEAVER DIRECTLY AT HIS WIFE'S HEAD... SPLITTING IT OPEN...KILLING HER. IT WILL BE AS IF HE NEVER HAD HER! HE WILL BE CHARGED WITH MURDER! ALL THE EVIDENCE WILL POINT TO HIM! EVEN JEAN WILL HAVE TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIM!

...AND SLOWLY, FAIRLY, RUFU WOUND THE COPPER WIRE AROUND THE IRON CORE, CREATING A POWERFUL ELECTROMAGNET. THEN HE SECURED THE MAGNET TO THE REAR OF THE TARGET BOARD, EXACTLY BEHIND WHERE ERICKO'S WIFE'S HEAD ALWAYS RESTED.



THAT'S HOW...TO ATTACH THE WIRELESS TO A STRONG CURRENT...AND WE'RE SET! WHEN HE THROWS THAT CLEAVER...

THAT NIGHT, THE SHOW BEGAN AS USUAL. OLD RUFU STOOD BY, WAITING FOR ERICKO'S ACT TO BEGIN...

HE BOSS ON IN STREET DECIDE ME... AND, RUFU? I GOT A JOB FOR YOU? C'MON!



THE ROGUESABOUT FOREMAN LIES RUFU OUT OF THE BIG TOP BOARD, THE DRUMS ROLLING. THE SYMBOLS CLASHED...

THAT'S THAT'S ERICKO'S ACT STARTING! I WANTED TO SEE IT! I...

YOU'LL SEE IT TOMORROW! THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT! I OWE THIS SOMEBODY A FAVOR!



RUFU FOLLOWED THE FOREMAN ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS. A FIGURE STOOD IN THE MOONLIGHT, WAITING...

HELP THIS GUY CARRY HER SAMS DOWN TO THE STATION, EH, RUFU?



P-YOU! P-YOU! ME I'M LEAVIN' NOW YOUR DAUGHTER CONVICTED ME!

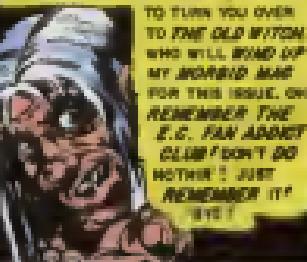
RUFU'S BLOOD FROZE! THE DRUMS WERE BUILDING UP TO A DRENCHING NOW, THE END OF THE GREAT ERICKO'S ACT WAS AT HAND. RUFU COULD SEE THE CLEAVER RAISING...SEE IT FLYING THROUGH THE AIR...SEE IT WAVING AS IT ENTERED THE MAGNETIC FIELDS...SEE IT SWERVE INWARD...CUTTING, SPLATTERING, THE BLOOD, THE RED PINK FLESH AND BONE. THE BRAINS...

CHOKE...AND
SHUT JEAN BY DAUGHTER!



WHERE'S TAKING MY PLACE
IN THE ACT, TOO? DON'T LET'S NO!

HEH, HEH! SO IF ANYBODY'S INTERESTED IN A SLIGHTLY UNUSUAL-LOOKING KNOT-THEFTERS BOARD, IT'S AVAILABLE. ONLY THING IS, IT'S A BIT STAINED! OF COURSE, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT OUGHT TO BE USED THAT WAY! SORT OF ADDS SOMETHING, DON'T YOU THINK? AND NOW, IT'S TIME



TO TURN YOU OVER TO THAT OLD WITCH WHO WILL BLOW UP MY JEWISH MAP FOR THIS ISSUE, OR REMEMBER THE E.C. VAN AGAIN? GLOW! DON'T DO NOTHIN'! JUST REMEMBER IT! BYE!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH YOUR FOMENTES HANGING OUT! COME IN! COME INTO THE HAUNT OF FEARY! I'VE GOT ANOTHER SLIME-SERVING BREWING IN MY CAULDRON, ALL READY TO BASH OUT. YEEH! IT'S BEG, MEAH... THE OLD BITCH! HEE, HEE! HURRAY FOR HORROR! ARE YOU BODY? THEN CLOSE YOUR RELATED NOSTRILS AND OPEN YOUR LITTLE LEERING MOUTHS AND I'LL SHOVEL IN FOUL FARE. THIS IS HANG GURKIN'S READING RECIPE... VINTAGE 1998. LISTEN, NOW, TO THE FASSTY TALE OF TERROR HANG GALLE...

MESS CALL

SECRETLY

ANH! IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE. IT IS GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED... SO VERY TIRED. AND MY EYES ARE HEAVY WITH SLEEP. I CLOSE THEM. I SLEEP...

COME, CORPORAL! WAKE UP ON YOUR FEET! I HAVE FOR YOU AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT! COME AT ONCE!



I AM GOING OUT THERE AGAIN. I DO NOT LIKE IT OUT THERE. IT IS WET AND COLD OUT THERE. HERE IT IS WARM AND DRY...

... YOU WILL PROCEED TO AREA H IN ME. YOU WILL DATE YOUR REPORT NOW. BY, ABBT... AND THE EXACT HOUR THAT IS IMPORTANT!

TEA, DEPLOYMENT



I AM CRAWLING ON MY BELLY THROUGH THE BUGS. IT IS COLD AND DAMP AND I SHIVER AND MY TEETH CHATTER. I GRIP MY BAYONET TIGHTER. I AM APPROACHING AREA 51. I MUST BE QUIET. THEY ARE THERE... FIVE ENEMY...



THEY ARE JUST OVER THAT HILL AHEAD. I WILL HIDE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE. I MUST BE QUIET...



WОСЕРЬ, 1947, 10:40 PM. FRENCH POINT FROM HIS FILE. REEF OF... I STOP WRITING MY REPORT. I LISTEN. SOMEONE IS HERE... HERE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE... BY GOD, I...



HE COMES AT ME... AN ENEMY SOLDIER. I SWING MY BAYONET AROUND, BURROWING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... PLUNGING IT UPWARD... FEELING THE CRUNCH-ING BONE... HEARING THE SICKING SOUNDS...



I AM FRIGHTENED. HIS ARMS SWING OUTWARD. I PULL MY BAYONET AND THRUST AGAIN... STABBING... BLASH-ING... CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS. I SEE HIS FACE... HIS EYES... AND THE BLOOD POURING... AND I AM EXC...



HE... HE IS DEAD... AND NOW, MY OVERLEUTNANT IS CALLING ME. CALLING ME BACK. EVERYTHING IS FADING. NO! IT IS NOT MY OVERLEUTNANT CALLING ME. IT IS THE DOCTOR'S VOICE. I AM BACK WHERE IT IS WARM AND DRY.



THE DOCTOR IS TALKING TO THAT MAN ABOUT ME...

SO... YOU HAVE BEEN FOR TOURS HERE. HOWEVER, IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME PROBLEM. ANXIETY. HE DREAMS HYPOCRISY, EACH NIGHT OF THAT EXPERIENCE IN THE FRENCHNESS IT ALMOST KILLED HIM. HOWEVER, HE IS PRETTY STRONG AND HEALTHY IN EVERY OTHER RESPECT. SO YOU NEED NOT HAVE ANY FRAU...



I WAS ASLEEP, BUT I AM AWAKE NOW. IT IS MORNING AND THE DOCTOR IS TALKING TO HERR HEINRICH...

...AND SO I HAVE ARRANGED EVERYTHING! YOU MAY TAKE HIM TODAY! I NEED NOT TELL YOU HOW BRAVE-FOOT WE ARE!

AH! I AM GLAD TO DO THIS FOR HIM, HERR DOCTOR!

HABEI! I HAVE HEARD YOU ARE LEAVING HERE TODAY, MY BOY! HERR HEINRICH IS TAKING YOU TO HIS HOME...TO LIVE! YOU WILL HELP IN HIS SHOP, OF COURSE, BUT THE WORK WILL BE LIGHT, AND THE HOURS SHORT! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS, HABEI?

THIS IS VERY GOOD OF YOU, HERR HEINRICH!

WE ARE RIDING IN A CARRIAGE. IT IS GOOD TO BE OUT OF THE HOSPITAL. HERR HEINRICH IS A KIND MAN...

YES, ACHAT IS VERY BRAVE, HABEI! BUT I HAVE SAVED CAREFULLY AND SELL ONLY TO MY OWN CUSTOMERS AND FRIENDS! BUT ENJOYMENT OF BUSINESS...LOOM! THERE IS MY HOME...YOUR NEW HOME...



HERR HEINRICH'S HOUSE IS BIG. IT IS VERY NICE TO LIVE IN A BIG HOUSE...

WELL, HABEI! HOW DO YOU LIKE IT? DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE?

OH, FEE, HERR HEINRICH! IT IS A FINE HOUSE!



MY ROOM...IT HAS NICE THINGS. THE BED IS VERY SOFT, AND I AM TIRED...

SLEEP WELL, HABEI! AND REMEMBER! TOMORROW, WE GO TO MY BUTCHER SHOP! GOOD-NIGHT!

GOOD-NIGHT, HERR HEINRICH! I WILL WORK HARD FOR YOU.

THIS FOOD IS GOOD. I LIKE ESPECIALLY THE PICKLED MEATS...AND THE WINE...

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH, HABEI! HERE! MORE WINE, MY BOY! IT IS GOOD FOR YOU!

IT IS WONDERFUL WINE...AND DELICIOUS FOOD, TOO!



AH! IT IS WARM HERE...WARM AND DRY. I LIE ON MY NEW SOFT BED...AND I DOZE...

COME, CORPORA! WAKE UP! ON YOUR FEET!

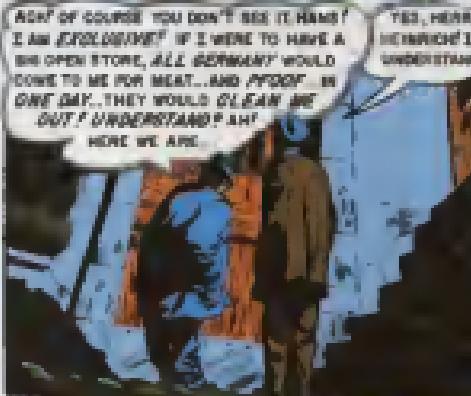


I AM STABBING, SLASHING... CUTTING HIM TO PIECES. I SEE THE BLOOD FLOWING, AND I AM SICK. HE IS DEAD, AND NOW, MY OVERLORDSHIP IS CALLING... CALLING ME BACK, NO! IT IS NOT MY OVERLORDSHIP, IT IS...



NOT OF COURSE YOU DON'T SEE IT HANS! I AM EXPLODING! IF I WERE TO HAVE A BIG OPEN STORE, ALL GERMANY WOULD COME TO ME FOR MEAT... AND PROOF, IN ONE DAY, THEY WOULD CLEAN ME OUT! I UNDERSTAND F AHP!

HERE WE ARE...



YES, HERB HEINRICH I UNDERSTAND.

THE AIR IS COOL, BUT I AM WARM. WE ARE WALKING TO HERB HEINRICH'S SHOP. I FEEL GOOD...



THERE IS MUCH MEAT IN HERB HEINRICH'S SHOP AND MANY PEOPLE COME TO BUY...

...WHERE YOU ARE, HERB LUDWIGMEYER? 2 POUNDS? CORRECTLY ER... HOW ABOUT SOME SCHNAPPS AT MY HOUSE TOMORROW? WE CAN TALK ABOUT THE MEAT SHORTAGE!

HAP HAP



BUT NOT ONLY DO YOU SELL ME MEAT BUT YOU INVITE ME TO YOUR HOUSE! YES, I WOULD INVITE THAT HERB HEINRICH!

HERB LUDWIGMEYER HAS COME. WE ARE DRINKING AND EATING GOOD PICKLED MEAT. AND I SLOWLY...

THIS NIGHT IT IS WONDERFUL! BUT YOU ARE A FOOL... YOU DON'T BUTCHER, EAT ANY HERB HEINRICH MEAT! THAT'S BUT COKE,

HERB LUDWIGMEYER, I MUST SHOW YOU MY BUTCHER CELLAR!

I WILL GO TO BED NOW! GOODNIGHT!

I GO TO MY ROOM AND UNDRESS AND LIE ON MY SOFT BED... SOFT AND WARM AND DRY...



HE COMES AT ME AND I SWIM AROUND, SINKING MY BATHMATE INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... CUTTING, STABBING, SLASHING HIM TO PIECES... THE BLOOD FLOWING... FLOWING...



I AM SWEEPING THE SHOP. I DO THIS EVERY MORNING, AND I HELP HERR HERRICH LIFT THE HEAVY THINGS. I AM STRONG.



AGAIN SAME DRINKING AND EATING WITH HERR HERRICH'S FRIEND. MANY TIMES I DO THIS... TONIGHT, I DON'T FEEL GOOD. DRINKING... TOO MUCH...



YOU ARE A GENEROUS HOST, HERR HERRICH!

...I AM VERY SLEEPY! I WILL GO TO BED NOW! GOODNIGHT.

I AM IN MY ROOM! IT IS DARK HEROT! I AM DIZZY! EVERYTHING IS SPINNING AND I AM FALLING... FALLING...



M... MY HEAD! IT HURTS! IT... IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE! IT'S GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED, AND





SOMEONE IS IN THIS SHELL HOLE WITH ME. I TURN, SEEING MY MAJOR...



AN ENEMY SOLDIER. I TURN AROUND, SAVING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY. FEELING THE CRUNCHING BONE. HEADING THE SUCKING BLOOD.



I PULL OUT MY BAYONET AND THRUST AGAIN, STABBING, SLASHING. CUTTING HIM TO BONES...



I SEE HIS FACE... HIS EYES... AND THE BLOOD POURING, POURING, AND I AM SICK...



MY HEAD HURTS WHERE I STRUCK IT AND MY DREAM VANISHED, AND I AM STRANDING IN A DARK GAMP CELLAR BEFORE ALL...

OH, LORD! A BUTCHER'S CHOPPING BLOCK! SO, OH, HANG FRENCHY!

CHOKES! THERE... THERE IS A BODY ON THE BLOCK! IT IS... MEET SHOTZ! FRED THIS IS NO BAYONET! THIS IS A CLEAVER IN MY HAND!

CORPORAL I ORDER YOU FORWARD FOUR ASSAULTMENT!

...I... HAVE DONE A HORRIBLE TERRIBLE THING! BUT... BUT HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAVE I DONE THIS? HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAS HE... HE...? GODDAMN HEAD! MY MEMORY! IT'S COMING BACK!

HANG! SOY SO UPSTAIRS!

I REMEMBERED, HOW? YEST YEST I WAS A BUTCHER... A GOOD BUTCHER! THEN, A SOLDIER! I WAS A SOLDIER AND I KILLED A MAN IN A SMALL HOLE! THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION! EVERY NIGHT I HAVE DREAMED OF THAT KILLING! T... T... YOU MADE ME DO THIS FRENCHIN WORK WHILE I DREAMED!

TEST... TEST YOU FOUND OUT I WAS A BUTCHER! LIKE NO OTHER SHOP IN ALL GERMANY, YOURS IS FULL OF MEAT! FULL OF THE BUTCHERS YOU HAVE BROUGHT DOWN HERE! YEST! OF COURSE! YOUR EXCLUSIVE SHOP IS FILLED WITH HUMAN MEAT!!

H. BOY
H. BOY



HE COMES AT ME... AND EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. IT IS SUDDENLY COLD AND DAMP AND HE IS THE ENEMY SOLDIER AND I AM SAVING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY, CRUSHING THE BONE... HEARING THE SICKEN SOUNDS... STABBING... SLASHING... CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS... HIS FACE... HIS EYES... THE BLOOD POURING... POURING...

GOOD LORD!

HIE, HEE! WELL, I'M MOST THAT'S MY DELIRIUM DISH FOR THIS ISSUE OF G.I. J. MAG. POOR HAN! THAT BLOW ON THE MORNING CLEARED IT FOR A FEW MINUTES... BUT HE SOON SLIPPED BACK INTO THE OLD GRIND! ANYWAY, HE WAS PUT INTO A BRICK BARRACKS ROOM, WITH DISHONORED WALLS AND BARRIED WINDOWS AND HE NEVER ATE ANOTHER HAMBURGER AS LONG AS HE LIVED! 'LIVE, ROLL WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN G.I. J. MAG., THE VAULT OF HORROR!'





YOU SAY YOU
DON'T GET OUT MUCH?

LET ME BRING YOU UP TO DATE! THE 32-PG FACSIMILE REPRINTS OF THE EC COMICS OF THE 50s IS PROCEEDING AHEAD! GET UP TO SPEED! NEW TO THE LINE ARE PIRACY AND VALOR! (THEY REPLACE WEIRD SCIENCE AND WEIRD FANTASY, WHICH HAVE COMPLETED THEIR 22-ISSUE RUN AND ARE AVAILABLE AS BACK ISSUES), BRIM-FULL OF SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND MORTAL COMBAT! SO, WHAT ARE YOU SITTING THERE FOR?

SUBSCRIBE!

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NO. 42
JULY

TALES

FROM THE



10¢

CRYPT[®]

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

WILLIAM
DRAKE



THE NEWSDEALERS OF AMERICA ARE SCREAMING...

STOPPIT!



BECAUSE, WITH JUST ONE DAY'S DISPLAY...

POOF! THERE GOES PANIC!

SO IF YOU'RE SELF CONSCIOUS IN A
B.O. (BUYING OUT) CROWD... IF PANIC
GOES POOF! TOO QUICKLY WHERE YOU
BROWSE... IF YOU'D RATHER NOT
PERSPIRE TILL THE NEXT ISSUE COMES
IN... THEN SUBSCRIBE! FILL OUT THE
COUPON, ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR FOR
EIGHT (8) ISSUES, AND MAIL! JUST
GIVE THE ENVELOPE A GENTLE SQUEEZE
AND POOF!... SAY GOODBYE TO ORDER
PROBLEMS! THE ONLY THING YOU'LL
HAVE LEFT TO WORRY ABOUT THEN
IS AN OFFENSIVE MAILMAN!

THE PANIC EDITIONS OF PANIC
ROOM 2026
338 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 12 N.Y.

I ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR (\$1.00) PLEASE
SEND ME THE NEXT EIGHT UNOPENED
ISSUES OF PAPIC. I WANT TO SAY GOODBYE
TO MY FRIENDS!

1996-1997 学年第二学期期中考试

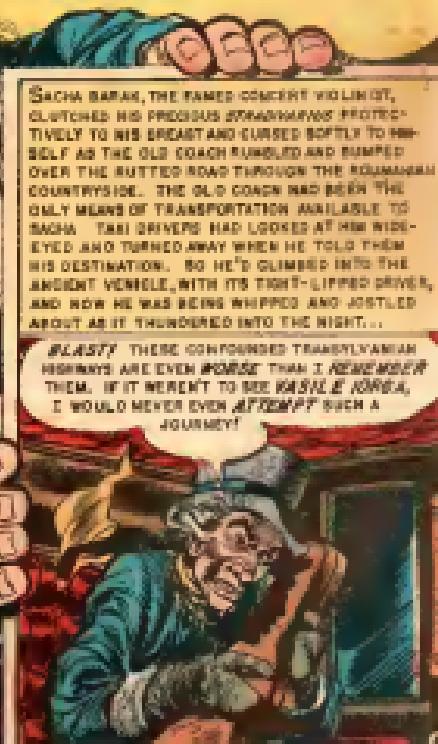
APPENDIX

Printed from the *Archives*, June 1964, Vol. 1, No. 2, *Memorial Cross of Discovery*, Presented to America by L. C. Pennington, the First American to Cross the Atlantic Ocean in a Sailboat, and the First American to Cross the Atlantic Ocean in a Sailboat in 1905.

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

GREETINGS, BOOBS AND GHOULS! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE MAGAZINE VOTED "I'D MOST LIKE TO BE SHIPWRECKED ON A DESERT ISLAND WITH" MARILYN MONROE! "HEM! THERE MUST BE AN HORROR IN THAT SOMEWHERE." ANYWAY, IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER MAN, WELCOMING YOU TO ANOTHER SLIMY SESSION OF SICKENING SELECTIONS STARTING WITH THIS SCREAM-STORY GUARANTEED TO DRIVE YOU NUTS! IT'S A MASTERSPIECE OF MUSICAL HORRORITY... A FAVORITE OF MINE! I CALL THIS OBSCURELY DELIGHTFUL INTO DELIRIUM...

CONCERTO for VIOLIN and WEREWOLF



SACHA SARAK, THE FAMES CONCERT VIOLINIST, CLUTCHED HIS PRECIOUS STRAUSZIARINA PROTECTORILY TO HIS BREAST AND CURSED SOFTLY TO HIMSELF AS THE OLD COACH RUMBLED AND RUMPED OVER THE BUTTERED ROAD THROUGH THE ROMANIAN COUNTRYSIDE. THE OLD COACH HAD BEEN THE ONLY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE TO SACHA. TAXI DRIVERS HAD LOOKED AT HIM WIDE-EYED AND TURNED AWAY WHEN HE TOLD THEM HIS DESTINATION. SO HE'D CLIMBED INTO THE ANCIENT VEHICLE, WITH ITS TIGHT-LIPPED DRIVER, AND NOW HE WAS BEING WHIPPED AND JOSTLED ABOUT AS IT THUNDERED INTO THE NIGHT...

BLASTY THESE CONFONDED TRANSYLVANIAN HIGHWAYS ARE EVEN WORSE THAN I REMEMBER THEM. IF IT WEREN'T TO SEE KASKE KÖRÖ, I WOULD NEVER EVEN ATTEMPT SUCH A JOURNEY!

THE FOAM-FLOODED HORSE CHARGED INTO THE OMNIBUS BLACK HILLS WITHOUT SLACKENING ITS MAD PACE. SACHA LEANED FROM THE COACH WINDOW AND SHOUTED AT THE DRIVER, WHO REMAINED AS HE HAD BEEN FROM THE START OF THE TRIP, RUDDEN AND MUTE.

SLOW DOWN, YOU FOOL! DO YOU WANT TO GET US BOTH KILLED?



SO THE FAMED VIOLINIST COULD ONLY PRAY FOR SAFE DELIVERY TO HIS DESTINATION. SOON, THE BREAKING CRASHING COACH CLATTERED LOUDLY OVER COBBLESTONES. THEY WERE PASSING THROUGH A TOWN THAT SACHA RECOGNIZED.

BRUDAY! THANK HEAVENS! ONLY SEVEN MORE MILES TO BRUDAY!



THE LAST SEVEN MILES BETWEEN OZMA AND BRUDAY WERE EVEN WORSE THAN WHAT HAD GONE BEFORE. THE COACH BOUNCED AND HEAVED OVER THE FITTED AND SCARRED DIRT ROAD. BUT AT LAST...

SO THIS IS BRUDAY! NO WONDER THEY DON'T FARM THE ROAD HERE. ONLY A FOOL WOULD COME TO THIS GOD-FORSAKEN TOWN NOW! NOT EVERYTHING IS MOLDERS IN DECAY AND ROT...



HUH, HEM! 'ONLY A FOOL', HE SAID. PERSON BY PUTRID PUP, KISSED, BUT FOOKE NEVER SEEN SACHA FOOL AS SACHA... HIS EYES HIS EYES AND A 333,000 PEBBLE TO PEACH THIS HORRIBLE HAMLET! YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN...



VASILE OZMA LIVES IN AN ANCIENT HOUSE AT THE EDGE OF TOWN. SACHA STOOD BEFORE THE MAN HE'D DREAMED SO LONG OF SEEING, BUT TIME HAS DONE ITS WORK ON HIS OLD TEACHER.

NOT! I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



SACHA ALMOST WEPT AS HE LOOKED AT THE FACE OF HIS TEACHER... A FACE THAT HAD ONCE BEEN SO HANDSOME AND POWERFUL, AND NOBLE, BUT NOW WAS WITHERED AND TOOTHLESS, WITH PASSED WATERY EYES. VASILE WAS A WERE SHELL OF THE STRICK, STEERN MAESTRO SACHA HAD SO LONG REVERED...

FORGIVE ME, SACHA! I DO NOT SEE AS WELL AS I USED TO. HOW GOOD OF YOU TO REMEMBER!

AS IF I COULD EVER FORGET THE MAN WHO RECOGNIZED MY TALENT WHEN I WAS BUT A CHILD... AND FIGHT ME ALL I KNOW.



SUDDENLY, SACHA NOTICED THE OLD MAN STIFFEN. DARK HIS FACE BROWN GREY AND HIS EYES FILL WITH TERROR...

SACHA! YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME TO VISIT ME HERE IN BRUDAY! IT IS DANGEROUS...

DANGEROUS! MY MAESTRO!



THE OLD MAN LOOKED AROUND
UNEASILY, THEN STARED AT HIS
FORMER PUPIL, AND WHISPERED.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER,
SACHAT? THIS IS WOLF COUNTRY! DON'T
YOU RECALL THE AND-
DERT THAT TOOK PLACE
ALMOST TWENTY YEARS
AGO WHEN I WAS LIVING
IN BUDAPEST AND YOU USED
TO COME FOR LESSONS?

HOW
COULD
IT BE
MARTA
TANNED
HAD
HAPPENED
SINCE
WHAT
INCIDENT?

'DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT YOUNG
COUPLE? THEY'D DRIVEN HERE FROM
BUDAPEST, IMPULSEIVELY RECKLESSLY
TAKING A TOUR THROUGH THE TRANSYLVANIAN
ALPS. THE RUGGED ROAD BETWEEN
CHIBAII AND ARJANU HAD PROVEN
TOO MUCH FOR THEIR MOTOR CAR.'

BE PATIENT,
MARTA! I WILL
FIND THE TROUBLE
IN A MOMENT!

IF YOU DON'T,
I SHALL
FREEZE IN
THIS MOUNTAIN
NIGHT AIR,
MUDOLF!

'A FULL MOON HAD RIDDEN, FILTERING
THROUGH THE SNARLED OLD
TREES, AND AN OMNIOUS SILENCE
HAD ENVELOPED THE LONELY SUR-
ROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE. A BUSHING
OF HEAVILY BRAMBLES CAUSED THE
WOMAN TO TURN HER HEAD, AND
WHAT SHE SAW BROUGHT A SOUL-
PIERCING SCREAM FROM HER THROAT.'

RUDOLF! EEEAAA... WHAT
IS IT, MARTA?



'IT WAS A WEREWOLF! IT SPRANG UPON THE YOUNG
WOMAN, SINKING ITS NAZON-SHARP FANGS INTO HER
SOFT WHITE FLESH. WHILE THE YOUNG MAN SCREAMED
FROM BEHIND THE CAR.'

AAAAAAGHHHHHHHHH...

MARTA! MY
GOD...



'AS THE YOUNG MAN CAME AT THE SLOBBERS,.
SNARLING, BLOOTHEINTY WEREWOLF, IT FLED. SHAKING
WITH HORROR, HE PLUNG HIS LANTERN AFTER THE
FLEEING BEAST. THE LANTERN SHATTERED AGAINST
A TREE TRUNK, BURSTING INTO FLAME, AND HE SAW, BY
THE SUDDEN LIGHT, HIS WIFE'S ANGUILING FROM
THE WEREWOLF'S CRODLING MOUTH.'



'DON'T YOU REMEMBER, SACHAT YOU HEARD THE BOOMS,
THE BROWNS, THE COMMOTION OUTSIDE. YOU WANTED
TO GO... NEVER MIND.'

SACHAT! YOUR DEBUT IS
ONLY TWO WEEKS OFF! WE
MUST PRACTICE. IT IS
NOTHING! GET BACK
TO YOUR MUSIC STAND!

BUT, MAESTRO!
THERE MUST BE SOM-
ETHING WRONG! LOOK!
NEW RUNNING WITH
LANTERN...



'DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE WOMAN LYING BEFORE
THE CAR, HER EYES STAREING, HER FACE ASHEN...
AND HER HUSBAND LISTENING IN HORROR TO THE
BOOMS...'

HE'S... DEAD!
NO! OH, LORD... NO!
MAESTRO! WHAT
HAPPENED TO HER?



THE OLD TEACHER FINISHED HIS STORY WITH A SIGH. SACHA NOTICED THAT HE WAS SHAKING AND COVERED WITH SWEAT, AND HIS TOOTHLESS OLD MOUTH DARTED...

DON'T YOU, MONSIEUR, OF COURSE, REMEMBER? I DO, REMEMBER! BUT THE EXPLANATION OF THE INCIDENT WAS SIMPLE ENOUGH. THE WOODS ARE FULL OF WOLVES! THEY'VE BEEN KNOWN TO ATTACK A MAN.



THERE HAVE BEEN MORE INCIDENTS SINCE THEN! READ THIS NEWS-PAPER SENT TO ME FROM BUCHAREST!



DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THERE IS A WEREWOLF HERE IN BRASOV?

NEARLY TWO MONTHS AGO!

READ...

DO YOU

</div



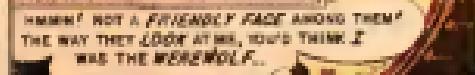
SACHA SPENT THE NEXT FEW HOURS IN THE CELLAR, MELTING DOWN SILVER COINS AND POURING THE MOLTEN SILVER INTO A MOLD HE'D MADE BY PESSING THE SLUG FROM AN ORDINARY BULLET INTO MOIST EARTH. AND AS HE WORKED, ELEPHANT STRAINS OF A BAD HYPER AIR PLAYED ON THE STRADIVARIUS BY THE PALTERING HANDS OF HIS OLD TRACHER FILTERED DOWN FROM THE FURLO...



...WHEN THE SILVER SLUGS WERE COOLED, SACHA REMOVED THE LEAD BLISS FROM THE REGULAR BULLETS AND REPLACED THE SILVER ONE IN THE STEEL JACKETS. HE WENT UPSTAIRS, FILLED THE CHAMBERS OF HIS REVOLVER WITH HIS HANDWORK, AND PLACED THE GUN IN HIS OVERCOAT POCKET...



THE NEXT MORNING, EVEN THOUGH THE OLD MAESTRO WARRED HIM AGAINST IT, SACHA WALKED INTO TOWN. THE SUN BEAT DOWN ON THE MARKETPLACE, BUT THE WARMTH IT BROUGHT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO OFFSET THE COLD, SUSPICIOUS STARES OF THE TOWNSFOLK...



BUT THERE WAS MORE THAN SUSPICION AND COLD-BEES IN THE TOWNSFOLK'S STARES. SACHA SEEMED TO SENSE A CERTAIN TEASERESS. PERHAPS HOSTILITY. HE PLUNGED HIS HAND INTO HIS OVERCOAT POCKET, FEELING FOR THE BEARING STEEL OF HIS REVOLVER...



SACHA RETURNED AT ONCE TO VASILE KORIA'S HOUSE. HE WAS VERY UPSET AND SPKE EXCITEDLY TO THE OLD VIOLIN TRAINER...

I THOUGHT IT WAS ACCIDENTAL THAT SOMEONE JOSTLED ME WHEN I FIRST ENTERED THE MARKETPLACE, BUT NOW I REALIZE THAT HE MUST HAVE STOLEN MY GUN! OR YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, VASILE? IT'S ONE HOUR. TOMORROW PEOPLE IS THE BERE-WOLF...

NOW THAT YOUR GUN IS GONE, PERHAPS YOU WILL LEAVE?



SACHA STARED AT HIS TRAINER MASTRO...

WAIT A MINUTE! HOW DID ANYONE KNOW I HAD A GUN? HOW DID THEY KNOW IT WAS LOADED WITH DE-VER BULLETS? HOW COULD THEY? VASILE! YOU...

YES, SACHA! IT WAS IT TOOK THE GUN FROM YOUR POCKET AND THREW IT DOWN THE WELL? IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE I AM AFRAID FOR YOU...



THE OLD MAN BEGAN TO CRY...

I DIED FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, SACHA! HOW AM I AMBIE ATTEM!

AN SAY AT YOUT HOD, MASTRO! I AM TOUCHED BY YOUR CONCERN FOR MY SAFETY, BUT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING BRIJUAN!



THAT NIGHT, A SIBERIAN MOON, NOT QUITE FULL, BATHED THE OLD MASTRO'S HOUSE IN A GOLD PALE LIGHT. VASILE, SACHA SCANNED A NEWS-PAPER WHILE VASILE PLAYED THE VALUABLE VIOLIN...

WHY THIS IS LAST MONTH'S HIGH-ANEST JOURNAL, VASILE... AND IT CAME TODAY...



THE MAIL IS BLOW COMING TO BRIJUAN, SACHA! YOU CAN UNDERSTAND?

SACHA WAS WELL INTO THE PAPER BEFORE A REPORT CAUGHT HIS EYE. HE LEAPED UP WITH A START...

MASOLE! LISTEN TO THIS! THERE WAS A FULL MOON LAST NIGHT WHEN FIVE PERSONS FROM CZECH BECAME DRUNK WHILE CELEBRATING A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND WANDERED INTO THE AL-FAAMED TOWN OF BRIJUAN...



"A SEARCHING PARTY FOUND THE FIVE BOODIES THE NEXT DAY OUTSIDE THE TOWN. THEY HAD ALL BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH", "BARE SKELETONS" "UNIDENTIFIABLE"

SEE SACHA! THAT HAPPENED LAST MONTH



YOU SEE, IT HAS HAPPENED SO MANY TIMES TO SO MANY HUNDREDS OF POOR UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE OVER THE YEARS, THAT WE HERE IN BRIJUAN ARE NO LONGER SHOCKED BY IT!"

I RECALL SOMETHING I READ ON MY LAST CONCERT TOUR, VASILE! I WOULDN'T JUMPT OF COURSE! HOW STUPID OF ME! TOMORROW, I AM GOING INTO BRIJUAN FOR ANOTHER GUN...



EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, SACHA SARAH, THE FAMED VIOLINIST, WALKED THE SEVEN MILES TO CHINERET IN ORDER TO PURCHASE THE BAR AND BULLETS HE NEEDED. HE CARRIED HIS EMPTY VIOLIN CASE.

I SHOULD HAVE SUGGESTED IT WELL, TOMORROW THE MOON WILL BE FULL AND I WILL BE WAITING FOR THEM... IN THE MARKETPLACE.



IT WAS PAST NOON WHEN HE RETURNED TO HASILE'S HOME. HE SPAKED CONFIDENTIALLY AS HE SHOWED THE OLD MAN THE SUM HE'D BOURGHT...

... AND TONIGHT I WILL GO INTO TOWN CARRYING MY VIOLIN CASE... AND WHO WOULD SUSPECT IT CONCEALS A GUN...



THE REST OF THE AFTERNOON WAS SPENT IN THE CELLAR, CAREFULLY MOLDING BULLETS FROM HOLTER SILVER.



AND WHEN TWILIGHT WAS BEGINNING TO SHROUD THE TOWN, SACHA RETURNED TO THE PARLOR WITH HIS SILVER AMMUNITION, LOADED HIS BAR, AND REPLACED IT IN THE VIOLIN CASE...

THAT'S DONE! AND NOW GOOD NIGHTS, HASILE, DON'T YOU EVER FORGET OF PLAYING THE VIOLIN...

NOT THIS ONE, SACHA! NOT A STRANGEMAN! BE SURE, YOU SAID I COULD PLAY IT WHILE YOU SLEPT...



SACHA RESTED IN HIS ROOM, LISTENING TO THE ULTIME STRAINS OF THE VIOLIN. SUDDENLY HE FELT HASILE'S HANDS SHAKING HIM.

IT IS ALMOST TIME, SACHA! THE MOON IS ALMOST FULL, COME!

LET US GO...

NO! NO SIR, OLD MAN! YOU'RE STAYING HERE! YOU TOLD ME YOURSELF IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS...



BUT HASILE INSISTED THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW SACHA ANYWAY, SO THEY WALKED INTO TOWN TOGETHER. ABOVE, THE MOON CAST AN EERIE GLOW UPON THE COBBLESTONE STREETS. THE MARKETPLACE WAS DESERTED, YET SACHA WAS AWARE OF A FRIGHTENING PRESENCE. SOMETHING HE COULD ONLY FEEL INSTINCTIVELY. THE WEIGHT OF THE WEAPON IN THE VIOLIN CASE COMFORTED HIM...



AND THEN, SLOWLY, THE FRIGHTENING PRESENCE MADE ITSELF KNOWN. THE TOWNSPEOPLE... ALL OF THE POPULATION OF JINOM... BEGAN TO APPEAR FROM ALLEYS AND DOORWAYS AND DEEP SHADOWS. THEY CAME TOWARD SACHA AND HASILE.



AND AS THEY CAME, SACHA COULD SEE THEIR RED EYES GLOWING IN THE FULL MOONLIGHT, AND THE HAIR BRISTLING ON THEIR FACES, AND THEIR GLEAMING WHITE FANGS GRIPPING SPITTLE. HE COULD SEE THEIR SNARLING, BROWLING, WEREWOLF FACES, AND HE PITCHED IN DISGUST.



HE SHRIEKED SHRIEMLY AT THEM, HIS WORDS MINGLING WITH THEIR LOW THROATED BROWLS. HE OPENED THE VIOLIN CASE.

AND THEN I REMEMBERED A STORY I'D READ IN AN AMERICAN COMIC BOOK ON MY LAST CONCERT TOUR... A STORY CALLED 'MIDNIGHT BESSEIN' IN A MAGAZINE CALLED TALES FROM THE CRYPT... ABOUT A TONWFUL OF VAMPIRES AND I KNEW I KNEW THAT BRODJA WAS A TONWFUL OF WEREWOLVES. AND I KNEW I'D HAVE TO BE READY FOR YOU...



SACHA'S LAMMEST CHOKED BACK IN HIS THROAT AND THE HOWLING CAME UP AS THE BEASTS SPRANG UPON HIM. FOR THERE WAS NO GUN-MACHINE GUN IN HIS VIOLIN CASE. ONLY A WHEELS OLD STRADIVARIOS' AND HIS FLASHING BROWLING TEETH TORE AND RIPPED AND GORED SACHA AS HE HEARD HIS OLD MAESTRO'S BLOWING VOICE...



CAREFUL OF THE VIOLIN! AND
SAVE SOME SOFT PAIT FOR A
TOOTHLESS OLD WEREWOLF,
REMEMBER! I BROUGHT HIM!
I FIRED THINGS! I TOOK OUT
THE GUN...

AND THEN SACHA BEGAN TO LAUGH. HE KNELT AND PLACED THE VIOLIN CASE ON THE COBBLED-STONES, FUMBLING WITH THE LATCHES...

I KNEW I WAS RIGHT! WHEN I READ IN THE PAPER THAT FIVE BODIES WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH, I KNEW THERE HAD TO BE MORE THAN ONE WEREWOLF!



THE SNARLING HOWLING BEASTS WERE ALMOST UPON HIM NOW... AND THEIR HOWLING SOUNDED LIKE LAUGHTER TOO. SACHA REACHED FOR THE GUN...

WELL, I AM READY FOR YOU, ALL OF YOU! BECAUSE I'VE GOT A GUN, LOADED WITH SILVER BULLETS! NOT JUST ANY GUN! A THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUN! I'M READY... FOR... GOOD LORD!



AND THAT'S MY VIOLENT KIDS IN PIECE, KODOKER. LET IT BE A LESSON TO YOU, DON'T FIDDLE AROUND WITH WEREWOLVES OR YOU MIGHT END UP LISTENING TO A FUNERAL MARCH IF SACHA ONLY HAD A BETTER MEMOIRE HE WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED THAT HIS OLD MAESTRO ALWAYS PULLED A SWITZON ON HIM. YOU'VE HEARS THE EXPRESSION, BEAT ME MAESTRO, EIGHT TO THE SOFA FOUNTAIN? LEAF WAS CONSIDERED BY A BLUE-ROSE ASSISTANT EDITOR. WE'VE GOIN' NOW, THE HAIR-KEEPER AMNTS. I'LL GIVE YOU LATER MEAN WHILE, I'VE GOT A DOOM LESSONED, I'LL BLOW DON'T FORGET THE E. FAN-ADDET CLUB WANTS YOU DOWN IF NOBODY ELSE DOIN'

THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

HEM, HEH! AND NOW IT'S MY TURN TO FREEZE THE MATURE BLOOD IN YOUR DEFENDED VENUS, KIDDIES! SO VENTURE INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, THE VAULT-KEEPER, WILL ENTERTAIN YOU WITH ANOTHER SCREAM-STORY FROM MY COLLECTION OF TERROR FOMES. I CALL THIS FELP-FARM...

BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

J. KRAMER -

A SORENCE SWEET SMELL OF FLOWERS MIXED WITH THE BLUNT AROMA OF BURNING WAX. YELLOW CANDLE FLAMES FED ON WHAT FRESH AIR SEEPED INTO THE PARLOR OF HAYSON'S FUNERAL HOME. FRANK WILLIAMS LOOKED FOR THE LAST TIME AT JOAN LORIN'S LOVELY WHITE FACE. THE DEATH-MARK FACE OF HIS BEST-NEVER-TO-BE. MR. HAYSON TIPTOED RESPECTFULLY ACROSS THE THICK RED-CARPET AND SPOKE IN A SOLEMN VOICE, JUST ABOVE A WHISPER... "THE DEAD GIRL'S MOTHER'S SOFT, UNCLEARING SOBS FORMING A BACKGROUND FOR THE UNDERTAKER'S IRONIC WORDS..."

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, MR. WILLIAMS. SHE WASN'T LIKE THAT WHEN THEY BROUGHT HER IN, BUT EARL PUT EVERYTHING HE HAD INTO THE JOB BECAUSE HE'S YOUR BEST FRIEND AND HE HAD TO BE YOUR BEST MAN.

YOU'LL... YOU'LL THANK EARL FOR ME... WHEN YOU SEE HIM!



HARRY MARTIN STEPPED FORWARD OUT OF THE SHADOWS. HE REACHED FOR FRANK'S ARM...

COME, FRANK! LET'S GO. I'LL BUY YOU A DRINK!

TH-SHAWD, HARRY!



FRANK WILLIAMS PICKED UP HIS BASS AND LET HIMSELF BE LED FROM THE FUNERAL HOME. HE SMILED BITTERLY AT THE GRIM JOKE.

EARL BOYD MADE OLD MAN HAYSON HE'S STUPID! PLAIN STUPID! PRESENT FROM MY BEST FRIEND...

WHAT AN ABSURD THING TO SAY!"



AND YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME THAT A VAMPIRE? I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT AND YOU'LL BELIEVE.



"SO I WENT! EACH NIGHT I HUNTED THE VAMPIRE, WITH THE WIND HOWLING THROUGH THE DARK STREETS AND THE SNOW CRUNCHING UNDERFOOT."

I'LL GET YOU! I'LL GET YOU FOR CHARLIE.



THEY SAT IN A BOOTH IN THE ALMOST DESERTED BAR...FRANK WILLIAMS, STILL WEARING THE CLOTHES HE'D FLOWN FROM NEW YORK IN... AND HARRY MARTIN, WITH THE BLACK ARM-BAND ON HIS SLEEVE.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, HARRY? WHAT'S ALL THIS STUPID STUFF? I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT A VAMPIRE KILLING JOHN?

THE FACT ABOUT THE VAMPIRE ISN'T STUPID, FRANK! BUT THE VAMPIRE DIDN'T KILL JOHN. I DON'T THINK HE'S DEAD.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M IN MOURNING FOR MY BROTHER CHARLIE DIED LAST WEEK. THERE WERE TWO OTHER DEATHS THE WEEK BEFORE!



THE NIGHT AFTER CHARLIE'S FUNERAL, I GOT DOWN MY HUNTING RIFLE. I DIDN'T BELIEVE THE TALK ABOUT A VAMPIRE. I WAS GOING TO GET THE VAMPIRE THAT WAS HAUNTING OUR STREETS...

WHERE'RE YOU GOING WITH A RIFLE, HARRY? WHAT GOOD IS A RIFLE? YOU CAN'T KILL A VAMPIRE WITH A RIFLE! I NEED IT IF YOU GOTTA USE A STAKE... A WOODEN...



"FOR FIVE NIGHTS I WENT OUT INTO THE WINTER BLACKNESS, I NOT TO ASK MYSELF WHAT GOOD IT WAS GOING TO DO WALKING IN THE BITTER COLD WITH THE SNOW WHIPPING IN MY FACE, BUT THEN IT'D THINK OF POOR DEAD CHARLIE WITH THOSE TWO BLOODY FANGS IN HIS THROAT, AND I'D KNOW THE ANSWER!"



MAHIE, MAYBE I'LL NEVER FIND HIM, BUT I CAN'T QUIT! I CAN'T... NOW...

Then, one night, I heard a surging cry. Then a moaning just a little louder than the moaning of the wind. I started running through the dark streets. And then I saw it, bending over the body of a girl... its ugly fangs sunk into her thin white throat.

GET AWAY FROM HER,
YOU FILTHY COWARD!



I kept after it, emptying the rifle at it... finally lost it. It just seemed to vanish into the shadows. I went back and looked at the girl. She seemed to be breathing...

Two fangs buried in her throat, just like in Charlie's...



The fire-bell was the only thing I could think of to get the town out. I kept pulling, making its mournful sound shatter the white silence. And they came! They came running...

YOU SAID IT, HARRY! I SAW IT! I SAW IT! I SHOT AT IT! BULLETS DON'T KILL IT! IT GOT THE LONG END!



I raised my gun, firing as I ran toward it. I heard the bullets thud into its vile flesh... ran it over...

MY GOD! BULLETS DON'T KILL IT!
IT'S A VAMPIRE. ONE OF THE LIVING DEAD! IT IS!



HARRY'S VOICE FADED. HE LOOKED AT FRANK SITTINS ACROSS FROM HIM IN THE BOOTH IN THE DESERTED BAR...

THE GUN... IT... WAS JOHN!

REALLY JOHN LOVED IT... I RAN ALL THE WAY TO THE FIREHOUSE. I STARTED PULLING THE BELL ROPE...



I took them to where JOHN'S body lay. DOC MORRIS LOOKED AT HER AND SHOOK HIS HEAD...

BLOOD DRAINED ALL NIGHT. BUT SHE'S ALIVE SOMEHOW!

SOMETIMES A VAMPIRE'S VICTIM BECOMES A VAMPIRE. THIS... THE ONLY WAY TO KILL IT IS...

... IS WITH A STAKE DRIVEN INTO ITS HEART AFTER DARK...



SOMEBODY BOY A STAKE AND WE STOOD A SILENT, GLOOMY VIGIL OVER JOHN'S BODY. I FELT SICK INSIDE... AND ODD... EVEN WITH A BIG BRIGHT FIRE GOING... BECAUSE OF WHAT WE HAD TO DO. AND THEN, WHEN DOC SAW THE FIRST ICE COLD STREAMS OF DAWN IN THE EAST...



IT'S TIME!

THEY HANGED ME THE STAKE, FRANK. I HELD IT AGAINST JOAN'S HEART. SOMEBODY ELSE STOOGED OVER IT WITH A BOOK!



FRANK LISTENED, STUNNED, HIS PIANO SLOWING...

IT WAS ANXIOUS, FRANK! THE REST OF THEM THEY COULD TURN AWAY! BUT I HAD TO LOOK! I HAD TO SEE!



YOU LOUSY MURDERER! YOU KILLED HER!

HE REACHED OUT, GRABBING HARRY... HE HAD TO DO IT, FRANK. HE HAD TO! BY NOW, SHE'D BE SLEEPIN' IN A COFFIN WITH DUST IN THE BOTTOM DURING THE DAY... AND AT NIGHT, SHOT TO DEATH IN THE BACKSTREETS, THIRSTING FOR BLOOD! CHARLIE GOT HER AFTER THAT... JUST TO MAKE SURE! AND THE OTHERS! WE EXHAUSTED THEIR BODIES... GREAT STAKES INTO EACH OF THEIR HEARTS...

FRANK RELEASED HIS HOLD. HIS RAGE AND HATE WAS STILL THERE, BUT HE KNEW HARRY MARTIN AND THE OTHERS HAD DONE WHAT WAS RIGHT...

DON'T I REMIND YOU THE TELEGRAM, FRANK, TELLING YOU TO COME RIGHT BACK HOME? DON'T I MEET YOU AT THE AIRPORT?

I'M SORRY, HARRY!



THAT NIGHT, FRANK WILLIAMS WENT ON A HUNT THROUGH HIS QUIET ILLINOIS TOWN. ARMED WITH A SHARP CRUCIFIX, A WOODEN STAKE AND AN ANGER WITHIN HIM... A BIT-TEETHED PATIENT ANGER...

I'LL GET THAT VAMPIRE! I'LL GET IT IF I HAVE TO LOOK FOREVER...



BUT FRANK DID NOT HAVE TO LOOK FOREVER. TOWARD MORNING, HE HEARD A BLOOD-CURDLING, BURGLING HAUL COMING FROM THE DARK STREET AHEAD. HE SPUN THROUGH THE SNOW, SAW THE LOATHSOME HIDEOUS THING BURGLING OVER ITS VICTIM, SUCKING ITS FILL OF BLOOD.

HARRY? IT'S GOTTEN HARRY!



HE INCHED FORWARD, HIS HEART POUNDING IN HIS CHEST SO LOUDLY THAT HE WAS SURE THE VAMPIRE COULD HEAR IT TOO. BUT IT WAS HIS CRUNCHING FOOTSTEPS IN THE SNOW THAT MADE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN...

BLAST IT! HEARD ME!



THE VAMPIRE, WITH ITS BLACK CAPE FLOWING BEHIND, COOLED THROUGH ALLEYS AND DOWN NARROW WINDING STREETS, SEEMING AT TIMES TO ALMOST FLY. FRANK POUNDED AFTER IT IN BREATHLESS UNRELENTING PURSUE...

...CAN'T LET IT GET AWAY...



SUDDENLY HIS QUARRY DARTED AROUND A CORNER. BY THE TIME FRANK REACHED THE SPOT, THE VAMPIRE HAD VANISHED INTO THIN AIR...

IT MUST HAVE GONE INTO ONE OF THOSE BUILDINGS! IT MUST HAVE SOME...



FRANK TURNED, HIS GLANCE FALLING ON THE SOMBER FAMILIAR STRUCTURE... HARROW'S FUNERAL HOME, WITH JOHN STILL LYING IN HER COFFIN...

COFFER OR COURSEST A VAMPIRE SLEEPS IN A COFFER! BY GEE WHAT BETTER PLACE TO HIDE ONE?



HE CROSSED THE EMPTY DESERTED STREET, TRIED THE DOOR, FOUND IT OPEN. HE PULLED THE COIL OF ROPE HE'D BROUGHT ALONG FROM HIS POCKET, AND ENTERED CAUTIOUSLY...

JOHN TOLD ME ABOUT THE CELLAR, WHERE THEY STORE THINGS AND PREPARE BOOKS... PERHAPS COULD THERE...



HE MADE HIS WAY ACROSS THE DARK PARLOR, BRUSHING AGAINST JOHN'S COFFIN. THERE WAS A STAIRCASE IN THE REAR. HE STRUCK A MATCH, STARTED DOWN, HIS SHADOW PERFORMING A GROTESQUE DANCE ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM...

CERTAINLY ARE PLenty OF COFFINS DOWN HERE, AND... CHOOSE... A BODY...



HE WENT FROM COFFIN TO COFFIN, PEEKING INSIDE, SEARCHING FOR THE TELL-TALE SIGN. AND THEN...

HERE IT IS! THERE'S DIRT IN THE BOTTOM OF THIS ONE!



SUDDENLY, FRANK BLEW OUT THE MATCH. HE'D HEARD A SOUND... SHIT GRINDING ON THE STAIRS ABOVE! HE CROUCHED IN THE DARKNESS, LISTENING, WAITING, AS A FIGURE CAME SLOWLY DOWN THE STEPS...



THE FIGURE SLIDED ACROSS THE CELLAR. FRANK LEAPED, WRAPPING THE ROPE AROUND IT WITH LIGHTNING SPEED...

WELL, WHAT'S GOING ON? LET ME GO! LET ME!

NOW WE'LL SEE WHO YOU ARE, YOU PENG...

FRANK FORCED THE SLEDGEHAMMER FIGURE TO ITS KNEES... LAUGHED ITS HANDS BEHIND ITS BACK... AND PUNCHED FOR A MARCH...

EARL! EARL BOYD!

FRANK! WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME KNOW YOU GOT HOME? I SAY, IS THIS YOUR IDEA OF A JOKE? O'MOND ENTITLED ME!



YOU'RE THE VAMPIRE, AREN'T YOU, EARL, MY BEST FRIEND... A VAMPIRE? YOU'VE COME BACK HERE FOR YOUR SLEEP, HAVEN'T YOU?

ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU KNOW I WORK HERE AT NIGHT, FRANK!

THREE BLOOD ON YOUR MOUTH, EARL! IS IT MARY'S BLOOD?

YOU KILLED ME DOWN FOR BOB'S SAKE, FRANK!

WHAT ABOUT THE COFFIN EARL... THE DIRT IN THE BOTTOM OF THIS COFFIN...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, FRANK. JOHN'S DEATH MUST HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH FOR YOU! YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!



OUT OF MY SIGHT, AM I? IF ALL EIGHT? THEN YOU WON'T MIND PROVING YOU'RE NOT THE VAMPIRE? YOU WON'T MIND BEING TIED UP IN THAT COFFIN...

IN THAT COFFIN, MARY?

BECAUSE IF YOU ARE THE VAMPIRE, YOU'LL FALL ASLEEP SOME DAY... AND WHEN YOU DO, I'LL BE READY WITH THIS SAWZ. GET ME!

FRANK! I KNOW HOW MUCH JOHN MEANT TO YOU. BUT WHY BLAME IT ON ME? I LOVED YOU BOTH! I WAS GOING TO BE YOUR BEST MAN! I...

GET INTO THAT COFFIN AND SHUT UP! IT'S ALMOST SEVEN ELEVEN, QUARTER TO BE VERY SOON!



EARL RELAXED SUDENLY. HE CLIMBED INTO THE COFFIN. FRANK TIED HIM SECURELY AND STARTED UP THE STEPS.

WHERE YOU GOING? WHERE ARE YOU GOING, FRANK? IT'S NOT A BURDEN IN THIS PLACE. I WANT TO SEE THE SUN RISE...

THAT CALENDAR WILL TELL YOU, FRANK. IT'LL TELL YOU THE EXACT TIME THE SUN RISES. IS IT THE EIGHTH? THERE IT IS? SUNRISE... FIVE A.M.!

YOU'RE RIGHT, EARL. LET'S SEE. TODAY IS THE EIGHTH. THERE IT IS? SUNRISE... FIVE A.M.!

FRANK LOOKED AT HIS WATCH...

THAT'S FIVE MINUTES FROM NOW, EARL/FIVE MINUTES! YOU'LL SEE! YOU'LL SEE I'M NOT THE VAMPIRE!



THE MINUTES CRAWLED BY. FRANK PEERED AT HIS WATCH. THE CAME AND WENT. EARL WAS WITHIN AWAKE, WHO CAME. FRANK HURLED THE STAKE AWAY IN DISGUST.

IF YOU WERE THE VAMPIRE, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ASLEEP BY NOW!

SEEP I TOLD YOU! AND THE REAL VAMPIRE, THE ONE WHO DOES THIS COFFIN, WAS NOT TEN AWAY! UNQUOTE

NET!



EARL'S LOOKING BRAIN CHANGED AS HE SPRAWLED, FANGS ERUPTED FROM BEHIND HIS GRINNING LIPS. FRANK SCREAMED...

MY GOD! HOW STUPID OF ME! ILLINOIS IS AN HOUR BEHIND NEW YORK!

THAT'S RIGHT, FRANK! YOU FORGOT TO CHANGE YOUR WATCH. I'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME TILL SUNRISE! ANOTHER HALF-HOUR! ENOUGH TO DRINK MY COFFEE AND FILL AGAIN...

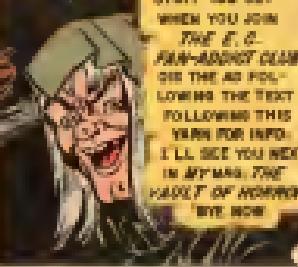


HORROR! HOW ISN'T THAT A BLOODY SHAME! RODGER! JUST BECAUSE FRANK'S WATCH WAS A LITTLE PAST HIS TIME RAN OUT. YOU MIGHT SAY FRANK CAME TO A DEAD STOP EH?

WELL, YOU'LL COME TO A DEAD STOP WHEN YOU SEE THE STUFF YOU MET

— THE E.C. FAN-ADDED CLIP DID THE AD FOLLOWING THE TEXT FOLLOWING THIS VERN FOR INFO: I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE HOUSE OF HORROR

BYE NOW



ON ICE!



Plimpton fingered the wad of bills as he slithered through the shattered basement window. Stepping carefully over the shards of glass, he slipped his cigarette lighter from his pocket and glanced around the murky room. There was enough scrap paper scattered on the floor to make his job a snap. He picked up a crumpled wad of paper: printed on it was the name of the firm whose plant he was about to destroy by arson. He shrugged his shoulders and spun the flywheel of his lighter; if the owner of Freeze-Out Frozen Food Lockers wanted to pay a bundle to have the joint go up in smoke, who was Plimpton to argue?

A minute later he had emptied his tiny cans of lighter fluid in the right places. A sprinkle of the liquid here... a dribble of it there... and the scattered debris was primed for the match. Wadding the saturated paper under a wooden desk that would be sure to catch fire rapidly, he checked the minute details which would make this job a complete success. Several trails of tightly twisted paper radiated out from the doomed desk, one leading to a wooden filing cabinet, another crossed the floor to stacks of paper-packaging in which foods to be consigned to the big freezers were wrapped. One minute for the general wad of fluid-soaked paper to catch fire, and the whole dump would be a seething inferno. He had just one minute in which to scramble out through the shattered basement window... he could do it easily. There was no question in his mind: this job was as good as on ice!

Plimpton smiled to himself, thinking of the wad of bills in his pocket... and the still greater amount waiting for him when he rendezvoused with Mr. Freeze-Out Frozen Food Lockers. Then, suddenly, there was the sound of a door opening somewhere behind him.

In one convulsive moment Plimpton darted across the room, swung open the ponderous door of a huge enameled chest and hurled himself into the big freezer. He flung himself against sharp-cornered food cartons crammed into the huge refrigerator, letting the lid close almost completely as a flashlight probed toward him out of the darkness. Through the scant inch between the freezer and the lid, he saw the old watchman advancing toward him slowly. Plimpton tensed to leap free of the box, but before he could move, the heavy lid had been slammed shut from the outside. The lock on the freezer lid snapped audibly.

Plimpton's fingers scratched frantically at the door, but the big chest was sealed tight. He screamed in anguish and pounded on the ice-crusted inner surface... already the numbing cold was strangling the breath in his lungs. His stiff fingers whirled the flywheel of the lighter and a bluish flame leapt up. The best did little to dispell the awful cold.

Two minutes passed... three... then the flame flickered and died. Plimpton tried to hammer on the frozen metal, but his arms were useless stumps... and deep inside his agonized body a core of icy fire sent pulsating shocks along every nerve and fiber.

In a frenzy he struggled to move, but his body was held rigidly now by the chill embrace of the frozen packages. He opened his mouth to scream, but his spindle became a tracery of gagging ice over his cracked lips. His tongue began to swell and turn blue-purple... the color of a flame that, moments before, was poised to touch off a searing fire. He moaned once, and then became merely another consignment of quick-frozen meat.



ARE YOU THE
CHAPTER
PRESIDENT?

YOU, TOO, CAN MEET NEW FRIENDS! JOIN THE
E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!

SEND FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT TODAY. RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR 7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SWAZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN.

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH \$5. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH \$55 FOR EACH MEMBER, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL?

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 106
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 13, N.Y.

Here's my two bits! I want the things and stuff like the kid's wearing! I want to meet new-friends like the kid's meeting! I'm a fan-addict! I'm mad!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____

STATE _____

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Huh, huh! We welcome your additions to the EC HORROR HIT PARADE keep pouring in from you clever little creeps. Some of 'em are gettin' pretty clever though... let's have at it. The following gettin'-silly ones were suggested by: Leonard Linwood, Staten Island, S. O., Bill Wilson, Queens Village, L. I.; Paul and Betty Argano, Los Angeles, N. M., Walter Leppert, Coraopolis, Pa., Arnold Cohen and Jerry Knight, Detroit, Mich., and Dennis C. Thompson, Elgin Field, Fla.

IN SEAMS I STITCH TO YE HAND, MADAM
I COME FROM ALABAMA WITH A BANSHEE
ON MY KNEE
GOKIN' ON MY MIND
OH JENNY GRIEVE, SWEET JENNY GRIEVE
I'M ACHIN' TO BLIND YOU
TRYING WITH A SCALPEL
SAY, SEE BONES!
IF I KNEW YOU WERE COMING, I'DA
MILLED A SWALE
I LOATHE YOU A SWELM AND A PECK
LAWD A ROPE AROUND YOUR NECK
WHILE DROOLING IN THE DARK, ONE DAY
FELL MY VAULS AGAIN WITH GOO
BRAIN ON THE ROOF
THE THIRD MAN SCREAM
OH, MAIMED PAPA
IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN TO HACK UP
WILD CORPSES
GARNET MY SACK TO OLE VIRGINIA
FRANCING WITH SPEARS IN MY EYES

And from E. Wilson Bedford of Oklahoma City, we received the following LURID LYRICS to THE GHOUL THAT I MARRY:

The ghoul that I marry will have to be
As dismal and grey as a mortuary.
The ghoul I call my own
Would be greatly improved if she used some
cologne.
Her claws will be sharpened, and in her hair
She'll wear a green eyeballs (there are not all
these!)
Blood of Jesus, I'll be afraid
Next to her, and I'm sure I'll be better.
A corpse she can carry
The ghoul that I marry must be

Michael Fitzgerald of NBC and Gordon Lewis, Jr. of Atlanta, Ga. suggest the following PUTRID PRO-GRIMES:

I BLEED THREE WIVES
GHOST OF THE TOWN
THE EDGE FIRKED HER SKIN
EAT THE CLOCK
GREATEST FRIGHTS OF THE MORTUARY
TROUBLE OR NOTHING
PLAYHOUSE OF SCARS
HUNG ON MALONE

Clay Kinnell of Draper, S. C. and Betty Anne Show of Houston, Pa. suggest the following EVIL ENTER-TAINERS:

TERESA SINGER
MURKY VAPOR
SID SQUEEZER
IMOCINE CHICKENS

Standard Classroom of Detroit, Mich. suggests a new dept. CHUDGY COMICS...

INGE AND MAGGOTS...
BRINGING UP BLOOMER
TIM TYLER'S MICK
STEVE RODED HER
MICKEY'S FERNED
KERRY'S WADE
HER HEART AND JULIET'S BONES

The LURID LITERATURE following was donated by Doug Stewart, Jr.:

TOM'S NUMBER
HUMPHREY'S STILL SICKNESS
THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES
THE THREE MUSKETEERS
UNCLE TOM'S STAINES
AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHT SLAYS
MY DEAR SLATED HER
THE LADY ON THE STAKE

PERVERTED POETRY by Connie Abbott of Baltimore, Md.:

When I was buried of sweet dreams,
Ghoulies came to my bier and it seemed,
They said they were sorry that I was dead.
And one of them began to scratch on my head
They said I was pretty and very sweet.
And another began to scratch on my feet
They said I was nice, with moist young charms.
And then they began to scratch on my arms
They said they were every I had to depart.
They sometimes reached in and took out my heart,
Luckily I awoke from this terrible dream.
But then I really began to scream.
For there in my nose sitting on sticks
Were my mother, my father and six other ghoulies!

Just enough room for a letter:

Dear Gruesome,

In case you don't know, American mags have sell more copies than local ones. And among the comic books, EC sells fastest, according to the owner of my favorite stand. They are to comic book mags what Marilyn Monroe is to movie mags.

Tony Abbott
Mendota, P. I.

Mendota, where the envelopes come from!

Comicsville 3-D mags THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR, showing your truly... and THREE DIMENSIONAL EC CLASSICS! It's week... or two for \$1.00! Just mail in the inside Sales-cription to this mag... one book for eight dollars. Address for 3-D orders, and address book-on-eye orders, or just plain old mail it:

The Crypt-keeper
Room 704, Dept. 43
225 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

THIS YARN IS DRIPPING WITH SWEET AND CLEAN HORROR...

THE BATH

MY MASTER IS A VERY STRANGE MAN. AT TIMES HE IS LIKE A WILD ANIMAL, SO CRAZED IS HE WITH HIS LOVE FOR SILVER. AND AT OTHER TIMES, HE IS ALMOST LIKE AN OLD WOMAN, SO DEVOTED IS HE TO HIS PERSONAL CLEANLINESS. HE BATHES CONSTANTLY, AS IF HE WERE ABLE TO SCRUB HIS EVIL DEEDS AWAY WITH FOAMING BATH SOAPS AND SCENTED SALTS. LISTEN TO HIM, HOW... SCREAMING AT ME! SUCH CANDERNESS! SUCH IMPATIENCE! AS IF EACH MOMENT LOST BRINGS HIM NEARER TO POLLUTION...

WELL, YOU FOOL! IS IT READY?



MY MASTER IS SEÑOR PEDRO TOROSA. HERE, IN HIS PLANTATION IN THE MATTER OF THE JUNGLE, HE IS ABSOLUTE KING. AND I... I AM HIS MAN-SERVANT. I HAVE BEEN HIS MAN-SERVANT FOR MANY YEARS. I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD MANY THINGS...

MY NAME IS RAUL VENDOZA. IT IS I WHO UNDRESSES SEÑOR TOROSA. IT IS I WHO PREPARES HIS BATH. IT IS I WHO PERFUMES THE WATER AND SCRUBS HIS BACK AND WASHES HIS EVIDENCE AWAY...

FIRST TOO HOT... NOT TOO COOL, RAUL! IT MUST BE EXACTLY RIGHT, HURRY, YOU IDIOT!

THE WATER IS JUST RIGHT, MASTERS... AND THE TUB IS ALMOST FILLED...



NOT TOO HOT... MAKE CERTAIN THAT YOU HAVE DRAWN THE SHUTTERS AND CLOSED THE DOORS. I DO NOT WISH TO CATCH A DRAFT!

YES, MASTERS! AND SHALL I ALSO SPRAKE A FEW GRAINS FROM THIS RECENTLY ARRIVED CAN OF BATH SALTS INTO YOUR TUB?



SEÑOR TOBOSA NEEDS NOT ANSWER MY QUESTION. I ALREADY KNOW WHAT HIS ANSWER WILL BE. SEÑOR TOBOSA LOVES HIS BATH-SALTS AND HIS GROOMING. AND HIS PERFUMES. TO TRY A NEW ONE IS ALMOST A NECESSITY. SO I NOT WRITE EACH WEEK FOR NEW BATH PRODUCTS TO BE SENT FROM THE COAST? BUT I WAIT FOR HIS EXPECTED ANSWER...



AND AS I OPEN THE LID OF THE CAR, I THINK BACK OVER THE MANY YEARS I HAVE SPENT WITH THE GREAT SEÑOR. BATHING, LET ME SAY, IS NOT HIS ONLY PLEASURE. THERE ARE MANY OTHERS. TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT DAY SO LONG AGO.

THESE LAZY WRETCHES ARE HOLDING BACK PRODUCTION. WHY CAN'T THEY MOVE FASTER? RACCO! TRY BEAR ME WITH THAT FANCY BANT THIS BOND. IT WILL MAKE ME SWEAT WHEN I BEAT THEM...



HOW HAPPY HE WAS WHEN THE NATIVES JUMPED TO HIS KNEE STING... AND HOW THEY CRIED AND WOKE UP IN DISBELIEF. SEÑOR TOBOSA LOVES HIS SILVER MINE, HIS PLANTATION, AND THE WEALTH THEY BRING HIM. BUT MOST OF ALL, HE LOVES TO BATH...

WORK HARDER, YOU DOGS! SHOW SOME RESPECT FOR MY AUTHORITY. WORK HARDER OR YOU'LL GET NOTHING BUT BREAD AND WATER TO EAT!



AND I, HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT, WOULD BE AT HIS SIDE, READY TO DO HIS BIDDING...

FILTHY CARRION! THEY'VE MADE ME EXCUSE MYSELF, SONCE, RECENTLY THE ANTHECTIC SPREAD. I DO NOT WANT TO DEVELOP A FEVER.



YES, MASTER. AND I WILL PREPARE YOUR BATH AT ONCE!



FOR I KNEW THAT SEÑOR TOBOSA ALWAYS INSISTED UPON BATHING AFTER ONE OF THOSE DAILY CONTACTS WITH THE NATIVES...

AH-HAH! MURO, JABALI. WILL YOU WANT THE ROUGH TOWEL OR THE SMOOTH MASTERT?



I KNEW THAT HE FELT POLLUTED AND DEFILED UNTIL HE COULD CLEANSHE HIMSELF OF THE AURA OF HIS CONTACT WITH HIS WORKERS...

I WILL TRY THE ROUGH TOWEL TODAY. YOU ARE KNOW, IT WILL CIRCULATE MY BLOOD. DISPLEASER AND ELIMINATE ANY DIRT PARTICLES THAT MAY HAVE REMAINED IN MY PORES. THOSE... FILTHY WRETCHES!



ES LA VERDAD, RACCO! I WILL REMAIN A POOR MAN AT THE RATE THOSE LAZY DEVILS WORK MY MINE. STARTING TOMORROW, I WILL START A NEW POLICY WITH THOSE WORKERS! EACH MAN MUST ONG HIS WEIGHT IN SILVER ORE... OR HE WILL BE LASHED SPREAD-EAGLED IN THE SUR FOR TWO DAYS WITH NO FOOD OR WATER!



YES... EL SEÑOR TOBOSA WAS A MUCH RESPECTED MAN. HAD HE NOT COME HERE TO THE MAFIOUS BRAZIL AND WORKED HIS SILVER MINE WITH THE HELP OF THE NATIVES? HAD HE NOT PROMISED TO TREAT THEM FAIRLY IF THEY WOULD WORK FOR HIM? HAD HE NOT BUILT A MARVELOUS PLANTATION AND SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH GOLD AND JEWELS AND OTHER TREASURES? HAD HE NOT DONE ALL THESE THINGS? HAD HE NOT DONE THE OTHER THINGS TOO...

WE CANNOT WORK ANY HARDER THAN WE ARE BOUNDING, MASTER. WE DO NOT EAT ENOUGH FOOD! OUR STOMACHS BLOWN, AND WE GROW FATTER, OUR FAMILIES STARVE. FOR FAIR, MASTER.

YOU DARE DEFY ME WITH YOUR TOUCH BETTER BET YOU FEEL BETTER!

HAD HE NOT BEATEN AND KICKED AND CURSED AND THREATENED THE NATIVES INTO SUBMISSION...

AND HERE'S MY ANSWER! TAKE GOOF THIS BACK TO YOUR WORM-INFESTED HUTS. TELL THEM... GOOF, OBEY MY ORDERS OR DIE!

COO WHOOHOO WHOOHOO



BUT ALWAYS AFTER THESE DISGUSTING EXPERIENCES... THESE CONTACTS WITH THE NATIVES... MY MASTER WOULD TAKE HIS BATH. FOR THAT SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD CALM HIM AND PUT HIM INTO A GOOD HUMOR AGAIN...

IF I CATCH ANYTHING FROM THAT MISERABLE TOAD, I'LL HAVE HIM RAISED TO DEATH!

THE WATER IS NOT, MASTER!

THE WATER WOULD LAVE HIM GENTLY, SMELLING OF SOAP AND BERMUDIANES AND BATH SALTS...

AH! GOOF! THE SOFTER, THE BETTER! I MUST CLEAN THEIR SLIME FROM ME, RAUL! I MUST REMOVE THEIR POLLUTION!

AND AFTERWARD, WHEN HE WOULD DRESS...

MY FACE LOOKS GOOD TODAY, BRAZIL! SO SMOOTH AND WHITE AND CLEAN!

YES, MASTER!



THEN AND ONLY THEN, WHEN HE FELT THAT HIS BODY HAD BEEN PURIFIED OF ANY CONTAMINATION, WOULD SEÑOR TOBOSA BE IN HIGH SPIRITS. AND MANY WERE THE NIGHTS I WOULD STAND AND WATCH HIM COUNT HIS GOLD AND CHECK HIS DAY'S PRODUCTION.

THE KENTOLAS STORE AND AIR PURIFIERS ARE WORKING, MASTER!

GOOF! GOOF! I... WHAT IS THIS? ONLY THREE TONS OF SILVER ONE DAY TODAY! I'M BEING CHEATED!

ONLY THREE TONS OF ONE! I'LL TEACH THEM TO CHEAT ME! I'VE BEEN LENGTHEN LONG ENOUGH FROM NOW ON I'LL BLOW THEM THAT I MEAN WHAT I SAY! FROM NOW ON I'LL DRIVE THEM AS THEY'VE NEVER BEEN DRIVEN BEFORE!



AND WHEN MY MASTER WAS ANGRY
LIKE THAT, I KNEW THAT MY BATHES
WOULD BE HEAVY AND TRYING. THAT
THERE WOULD BE MANY MORE BATHES.

YOU'LL ALL WORK
HARDER AND LONGER!
I'M INCREASING YOUR
HOURS TO MAKE YOU
REALIZE THAT MY
ORDERS ARE NOT
MERELY WORDS...
THAT YOU...

COUGH COUGH



BUT WORST OF ALL, WERE THE
DAYS WHEN THE UNEXPECTED HAP-
PENED.

YOU COUGHED! YOU
FILTHY BOY! YOU
SPREW YOUR DIRTY
GERMS UPON ME.
I'LL FIX YOUR
GUARDS' GUARDS!

NO, MASTER!
I COULDNT
HELP IT!
MERCI, POR DIOS!



SEÑOR TOBOSA WOULD SHRIEK FOR
HER GUARDS AND THEY WOULD CLOSE
IN ON THE POOR SICK NATIVE WHO
DAINED INFLUENZA.

TAKE HIM AWAY! GET
HIS MOUTH SHUT! FORTUNE HAD TELL
HIM!



ON THOSE DAYS, ALL WOULD FEEL HIS WRATH. IT WAS
BEST TO OBEY HIM INSTANTLY OR SUFFER GRAVE
CONSEQUENCES.

BRAVE THE ROOM! BRING ME MY
METAL BATH TUB! DRAW MY
BATH! GUARD! IF I
COME DOWN WITH A GOLD...

YES, MASTER!



I REMEMBER THE DAY EL SEÑOR RAIDED THE NEARBY
NATIVE VILLAGE FOR MORE WORKERS...

NO! PLEASE! DON'T TAKE
OUR SON AMI! HE IS TOO YOUNG...
TOO YOUNG! HE WILL NOT
STAND THE STRAIN! WE NEED
OF YOU. TAKE US, BUT...

STAND BACK! YOU
OLD FOOL! HE IS
CAPABLE OF ONE-
BURN! HE WILL
COME WITH US...



FOR AFTER THAT, THINGS WERE NOT THE SAME. THE
BOT INFUMATED EL SEÑOR. OFTEN, UNDER THE HOT,
BLAZING SUN, WHEN THE OTHER FORCED LABORERS
STAGGERED BACK AND FORTH FROM THE MINE, BARCERLY
ABLE TO STAND, SEÑOR TOBOSA WOULD PICK ON THE
BEST.

WORK, I SAID! GET BACK ON YOUR FEET! BOOM! BOOM...
DO AS I SAY! YOUR LIFE IS MONEY! BACK
ON YOUR FEET!



AND THEN HE WOULD COME, PAINTING AT ME, ASHAMED
BY HIS EXPERIENCE.

I AM CURSED WITH TREACHEROUS WORKERS AND
WEAKLING BOYS! JUSTAS ENOUGH MY ARMS ARE
WEARY FROM BEATING THEM. I FEEL FILTHY FROM
BEING NEAR THEM. RAUDU! MY BATH...



YES, I REMEMBER IT WELL... ALL OF IT. THE BOY
BECAME WEAKER AND WEAKER UNDER THE CRUELTY
OF MY MASTERS' ANGRY BEATINGS, FINALLY DIED
LASTING... TODAY.



I REMEMBER HOW THE BOY'S PARENTS RUSHED FROM THEIR
STATIONS TO THEIR DEAD SON'S SIDE.



HOW THEY FOOLISHLY ATTACKED MY MASTERS.



AND HOW THEY EACH FELT THE STINGING BULLETS
FROM EL'S BROWNING SLEAVING REVOLVER.



I REMEMBER HOW HE STOOD OVER THEM, SPREADING IN REVULSION...

'I'LL REACH YOU TO VIOLATE MY PERSON, TO DARE TOUGH ME WITH YOUR GREASY HANDS! I'LL LET YOUR CARPASSES ROT IN THE SUN!



... HOW HE SCREAMED AT THE OTHERS...

'NOW GET BACK TO WORK, YOU SWINE! OR YOU'LL ALL ROT IN THE SUN WITH THEM!'



... HOW HE CAME IN FRANTIC...

'BY BATH MARCH! GET MY BATH READY! I MUST CLEAHESE MYSELF OF THEIR FILTH...

YES...



SO I OPEN THE LID OF THE CAN AND I EMPTY ITS CONTENTS INTO MY MASTER'S BATH. IT IS A BIG CAN BUT HE DOES NOT SEE ME DO THIS.



I LEAD MY MASTER TO THE TUB AS I HAVE DONE SO OFTEN...



THE BOARDS CREAK UNDER MY FAT MASTER'S WEIGHT AS I HELP HIM INTO THE TUB.



I LISTEN TO HIS SCREAMS OF PAIN AS HE SINKS INTO THE SWELMING AND BOILING BATH WATER...



I LISTEN TO MY MASTER SCREAM, JUST AS THE BOY HE BEAT TO DEATH SCREAMED, AND THE BOY'S PARENTS HE SHOT TO DEATH SCREAMED. FOR MY MASTER'S BATH HAS BEEN FILLED WITH A GANGLIA OF THE TERRIBLE, FINK, JAWNOE, FLESH-EATING, PIRHOOGA FISH OF THE MATFO GROO...



THE SILVER PIRHOOGA, RIPPING TEARING, STRIPPING MY MASTER'S FAT FLABBY FLESH FROM HIS BONES, CLEANSING HIM AS HE HAS NEVER BEEN CLEANSED BEFORE, EVERGIVING THE BOY AND HIS PARENTS, WHO WERE ALSO MY PARENTS...



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HIE, HEE! HOBBLE INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, ANXIETY, AND YOUR SINNER-CHIEF. YOUR SLOP-SERVER, YOUR HOSTESS-IN-HEAVERS, THE OLD WITCH, WILL FEED YOU FOUL FARE FROM HER CAULDRON. HEY IT'S ME AGAIN, READY TO WIND UP L.A.'S NEWEST ANDICIA JOINT ITEM FROM MY MORNIN' MIND, SO OPEN YOUR BAPING LITTLE MOUTHS AND I'LL POP IN THE FUTURIS FET-AROSE I CALL...

HOODWINDED!

THE AIR IS STIFLING IN THE OLD BOTTLE... STINKS OF WHISKEY AND COKE AND CUST AND SWEAT. THE SHAGGY FURNITURE, USUALLY SO ORDERLY, SHOWS SIGNS OF THE STRUGGLE THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE. LEON LETS HIS GALE BANNER ABOUT THE ROOM... STUPID AT THE BRAINS, AGED WALLPAPER WITH THE FADED, SACK-SACK PATTERN... THE FOUR BAD WALLS... AS IF THEY MIGHT TELL HIM WHAT THEY'D WITNESSED BEFORE HE'D BOTTEN HOME. HE GLANCED QUICKLY INTO THE BATHROOM ACROSS THE HALL, STUDYING WHAT LIES THERE ON THE HUNG COLD TILES. THE CORSE RESES IN HIS THROAT AND SPICER IN IT, HE HURLED DART TO HIS BROTHER... TO CHET'S TORN SHIRT AND THE BANDAGES. CHET LOOSED WHAT LEON, TRYING TO READ WHAT IS IN HIS EYES, BUT THEN TELL HIM NOTHING. FINALLY CHET SCREAMED...

AREN'T YOU GOING TO FELL AT ME, LEON?
AREN'T YOU GOING TO GET MAD? DON'T
JUST STAND THERE! SAY SOMETHING!



WHY DON'T YOU ACT ME, LEON?
WHY DON'T YOU BEAT ME TO A
BLOODY PULP? WHAT ARE YOU
WAITING FOR? WHAT ARE YOU
THINKING ABOUT?



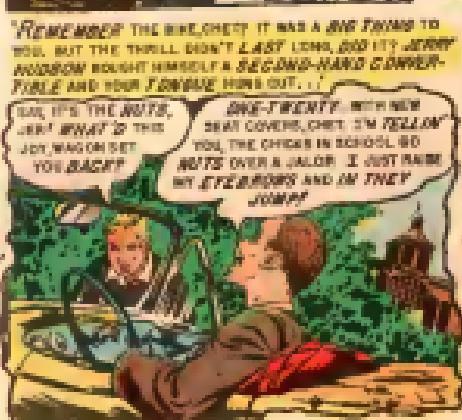
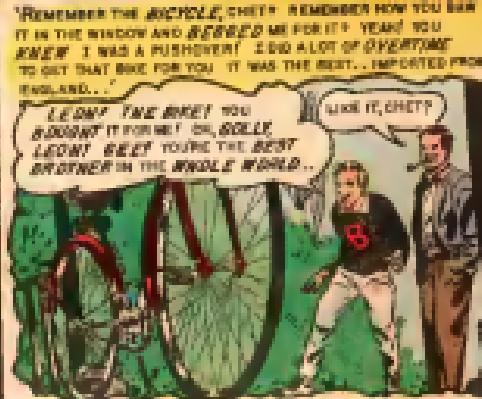
TWENTY YEARS AGO, WHEN MA WAS SPATULATING, LYING IN HER BED, GASPING FOR BREATH...

AND SHE MADE ME PROMISE... HE'S A BABY, LEON! MAMA... TAKE CARE OF HIM... BOB... YOU'LL BE... ALL ALONE... JUST THE TWO... SEE... YOU, PROMISE ME...

I PROMISE, MAMA... I'LL LOOK AFTER CHET. I'LL KEEP HIM WITH ME... I'LL WORK FOR HIM... I...

MA NEVER HEARD THAT PROMISE, CHET! I MADE IT, BUT IT FELL ON DEAF EARS. SHE WAS DEAD...

MAMA... MAMA... SPEAK TO ME... I'M... BOB... BOB...





"THAT'S THE WAY I WAS, HUH, CHET? I ALWAYS CHOSE UP SPENDING MORE BECAUSE YOU HAD TO HAVE THE BEST..."

"IT WON'T BE TOO BAD FIFTEEN MONTHS TO PAY OFF THE BALANCE. LET'S SEE, THAT'S THREE-HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS... PLUSS INTEREST..."

"I'LL GET A JOB AFTER SCHOOL. LEON, I'LL PUT THE GAS AND YOU CAN USE THE CAR!"

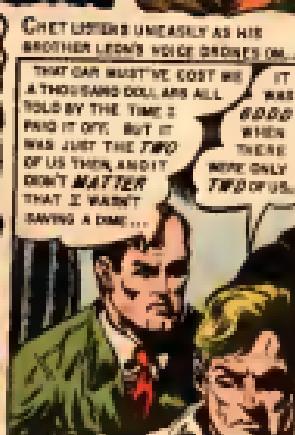
"I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU, CHET! NEW CLOTHES? THREE SPECIAL HOLIDAYS? I'LL SEE GOLF DATES? I CAN'T... YOU IN THE MORNING?"

CHET LISTENED UNBELIEVABLY AS HIS BROTHER LEON'S VOICE DRIFTED ON...

THAT CAR MUST HAVE COST ME A THOUSAND DOLLARS ALL TOLD BY THE TIME I PAID IT OFF. BUT IT WAS JUST THE TWO OF US THEN, AND IT DON'T MATTER THAT I WASN'T SAVING A DIME...

"IT DIDN'T MATTER TILL I MET CLAIRE! THREE YEARS AGO, IT WASN'T SO BAD. I COULD SEE THAT LONG! YOU WERE AWAY AT COLLEGE, THEN YOU'D WANTED TO STUDY LAW..."

"I'LL GO BACK, LEON! I'LL..."



LEON LOOKS AWAY FROM THE BATHROOM WITH ITS COLD TILE FLOOR AND THE COLD BODY LYING THERE. HE LOOKS AT HIS BROTHER, AND A SHADOW DARKENS HIS FACE...

"SO SURELY WON'T IT BE GREAT IF WE COULD ALL GET BACK YOU AND CLAIRE AND ME?"

"LEON, I COULDN'T HELP WHAT HAPPENED."

"SHE WAS TWENTY THREE WHEN I MET HER... ELEVEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN I. IF EVER THERE WERE TWO PEOPLE THAT WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER, IT WAS CLAIRE AND ME."

"SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW GOOD I FELT WHEN I SAW THAT SAME. IT MEANT CLAUDETTE COULD GO TO COLLEGE."

"HE MUST BE A WONDERFUL BOY FOR YOU TO BE SO GOOD TO HIMSELF."



"CLAIRE WAS LIKE THAT, CHET! NO MATTER WHAT SHE MAY HAVE THOUGHT, SHE NEVER ONCE SUGGESTED THAT I WAS SPOILING YOU!"

"WELL, I'VE HAD TO BE BOTH FATHER AND MOTHER TO HER, CLAIRE. IF I DON'T SEE TO IT, HE'S GOT A BREAKAWAY WHO WOULD..."

"YOU'RE A WONDERFUL PERSON, LEON!"

"CLAIRE WAS SATISFIED JUST WALKING WITH ME. SHE KNEW I COULDN'T AFFORD TO TAKE HER OUT, WITH TOWNS COLLEGE..."

"IT WOULD SOUND FUNNY FROM ANYONE MY AGE, BUT I'VE BEEN THE FIRST GIRL I'VE... ER... DONE WITH SINCE I'VE BEEN TOO BUSY."

"I ONLY WENT WITH ONE OTHER BOY, LEON. HE TRIED TO GET FRIENDS WITH ME, SO I STOPPED SEEING HIM..."



"CLAIRE WAS A GOOD GIRL, CHET. THAT'S THE WAY I WANTED HER TO STAY. REMEMBER WHEN YOU MET HER? YOU'VE BEEN HOME FROM COLLEGE FOR THE SUMMER VACATION."

"WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME, LEON. FINALLY... BUT MYSELF A GIRL? WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME."

"CLAIRE IS MARTHA SOMETHING SPECIAL TO HERSELF. I'D BRAVE THE JAHADOMMOM, CHET! SHE CAN REALLY DON'T WAIT! YOU'LL SEE..."



"WHILE CLAIRE WAS OUT IN THE KITCHEN TELL YOU ABOUT HER... HOW WE SAW EACH OTHER EVERY NIGHT... HOW SHE CAME TO THE HOUSE TWICE OR THREE TIMES A WEEK TO COOK FOR ME, ONLY YOU... YOU STARTED THINKING THINGS..."

"SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, LEON? SHE'S A GOOD PERSON, CLAIRE AND I ARE GOING TO BE MARRIED..."

"BUT MY MIND MADE NO DIFFERENCE TO YOU... TO YOUR ATTITUDE. THE NEXT NIGHT, WHEN I GOT HOME FROM WORK, THERE WAS A NEW TV SET IN THE LIVING ROOM."

"I'D BEEN WAITING FOR CLAIRE AND ME TO GET MARRIED! THAT WE'LL COULD NOT MORE THAN I'VE NOT IN THE BANK..."

"I WAS JUST THINKING OF HOW LEON, BUT IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT, SEND IT BACK!"



LEON'S VOICE FADES AND HE IS SILENT FOR A MOMENT. CHEF WATCHES HIM PACE BACK AND FORTH...

THAT'S IT. SET WENT WITH YOU WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO COLLEGE AND BEFORE I EVEN FINISHED PAYING FOR IT, YOU'D SOLD IT...

I NEEDED MONEY, LEON. I NEEDED IT URGENTLY...

LEON STOPS BEFORE HIM, AND CHEF CAN SEE THE ANGER MOUNTING IN HIS EYES...

FOR SOME CHEAP DADGUM UP THERE! BECAUSE OF SOME CHEAP GAMES, CLAIRE AND I HAD TO PUT OFF GETTING MARRIED...

I KNOW! YOU'VE GOT PLENTY TO BE MAD ABOUT, LEON...

LEON TURNS AND LOOKS AGAIN AT THE BODY ON THE COLD HARD TILE FLOOR OF THE BATHROOM...

YOU ALREADY HAD TO SOMETHING AND I NEVER APPROVED OF CLAIRE AND I WERE CONSTANTLY PUTTING OFF OUR MARRIAGE. YOU THREE HEARD I KEPT HER WAITING BECAUSE OF YOU FOR THREE YEARS THEN YOU CAME HOME FROM COLLEGE! DUNTF!



"YOU HAD PLANS. BIG PLANS. YOU STARTED TALKING FAST, BUT I WAS THROUGH..."

SO THIS OTHER GUY AND I... WE SAT DOWN AND FIGURED OUT HOW IN A FEAR WE COULD PAY OFF A SERVICE STATION AND EVENTUALLY RUN IT INTO A GRAVE...

"FONK, CHEF! IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, GO TO IT! BUT DON'T EXPECT ANY MORE HELP FROM ME. I'M FINISHED WITH THAT COLLEGE MONEY TO REPARSED. CLAIRE AND I ARE GOING TO..."

"I DIDN'T HAVE TO FINISH! I COULD SEE IT IN YOUR FACE..."

"THE COLLEGE MONEY, CHEF. WHERE IS IT? HAND IT OVER!"

"LOOK, LEON! I GOT IT BACK FROM THE BURGAR WHEN I HAD THIS CHANCE FOR A REAL BTF..."



"IT WAS OUT THERE, PARKED AT THE CURB, ONE OF THOSE FANCY FOREIGN SPORT CARS..."

"YOU KNOW WHAT THAT JOB COST ME? EIGHT SEVEN THOUSAND BUCKS! THREE YEARS AGO! I GOT IT FOR TWO! THE STUNT MURKED I GOT BACK FROM COLLEGE AND THE TWO HUNDRED THEY ALLOWED ME FOR THE OLD BEAF..."

"YOU STILL OWN A THOUSAND DOLLARS ON IT..."

"I TRIED TO SPEAK. TRIED TO GET MAD. BUT THE WORDS WOULDN'T COME OUT. AND THEN CLAIRE PUT HER HAND ON MY SHOULDER..."

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, LEON! I'LL BTF!"

"AND IF I OWN MY OWN SERVICE STATION, LEON, REPAIRS AND GAS WON'T COST ME A CENT!"

"RIGHT!"



"SO CLAIRE AND I PUT OFF OUR WEDDING AGAIN. BUT IT WAS ALL JUST TALK. YOU NEVER DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT SERVICE STATION. YOU WERE THE SAME OLD CHEF. AND THAT EXPENSIVE CAR WAS EVERYTHING..."

"JUST THE DOWN PAYMENT FOR A RADIO, LORI. I'LL PAY OFF THE REST MYSELF WHEN I GET A JOB..."



"YOU NEVER LOOKED FOR A JOB..."

"MR. WILSON SAID I COULD BRAKE IT TO YOUR OFFICE TO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S ON SALE! TWENTY-EIGHT DOLLARS! THAT'S THE SMALLEST HORN YOU EVER SAW! I'VE JUST GOTTA HAVE IT..."



"ARE I KEPT SWELLING OUT UNTIL CLAIRE PUT HER FOOT DOWN. THAT WAS LAST NIGHT WHEN YOU ASKED ME FOR ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS..."

"A STERLING SILVER HORN ORNAMENT FOR HIS CART NO, LORI! YOU GIVE HIM THE MONEY AND I'M THROUGH WITH YOU!"



"YOU WERE SHAMED, WEREN'T YOU, CHEF? IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER REFUSED YOU ANYTHING! MAYBE THAT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED THIS AFTERNOON. MARRY IT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED ANYHOW. YOU CAME HOME AND FOUND CLAIRE HERE...ALONE. AND YOU WANTED HER TOO..."

"I DON'T DRIVE, CHEF. NOW, CHEF STOP IT! STOP!"

"IF YOU WON'T HAVE A DRINK WITH ME, HOW'S ABOUT A LITTLE KISS?"



"SO YOU TOOK HER..."

"YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, CLAIRE!"

"DON'T CHEF! PLEASE DON'T KISS... OH, CHEF! NO..."



"LATER, WHEN YOU LOOKED FOR HER, YOU COULDN'T FIND HER..."

"CLAIRE! CLAIRE, WHERE ARE YOU?"



"UNTIL YOU CAME TO THE BATHROOM AND SAW HER LYING ON THE COLD WHITE TILE FLOOR WITH THE FOAM STAINS AROUND HER MOUTH AND THE MEDICINE CABINET OPEN AND THE EMPTY COKE BOTTLE IN THE SINK. YOU SAW HER ASH-GRAY TWISTED FACE AND KNEW THAT SHE WAS DEAD."



LEON STANDS OVER HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, AND THERE IS A FLAMING RAGE BURNING IN HIS EYES...

I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING, GRET! WHAT I DON'T GIVE, I TAKE!



...A RAGE THAT BURNS TO BURN BRIGHTER AND WILDER...



...WILDER AND WADDER EACH MINUTE...

I NEVER COULD REFLIE YOU, GRET! YOU'LL MAKE THAT ORNAMENT FOR YOUR CAR!



BEFORE LONG, LEON DOYLE IS TEARING ALONG THE HIGHWAY, FEELING THE WARMTH OF GRET'S BODY BEHIND HIM, AND LEON IS LAUGHING A MANIACAL KIND OF LAUGH.

I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANTED, GRET! I EVEN GAVE YOU CLAIRE AND NOW... EH... EH, YOU'VE GOT YOUR ORNAMENT? EH... EH! LIKE IT, GRET! LIKE IT?



But GRET'S BODY IS SILENT! HE DOESN'T ANSWER LEON'S QUESTION HOW CAN HE...

LIVE THE HOOD ORNAMENT, GRET! EH... EH... EH...



FOR GRET'S EYES ARE CLOSED TO THE SIGHT OF THE ROAD FLITING AT HIM, HIS EARS ARE DEAF TO THE ROAR OF THE ENGINE. HE DOES NOT FEEL THE WIND RUSHING IN HIS HEAD WHERE LEON HAS FASTENED IT SECURELY TO THE HOOD...



HEH, HEH! WELL, CREEPY! THAT'S THE TMR! DOESN'T THAT TOP 'EM ALL? ANYTHING, IT PUTS THE E.O. ON CLAW'S FERNETTO PERIODICAL FOR THIS ISSUE! WELL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE FEST OF HORROR, BY THE WAY! DID YOU HEAR SHE DIED IN HEADLESS BODY THAT GOT SWOONED A BOTTLE OF POP BECAUSE... BETTER, BETTER, BETTER ARE! HEH, HEH! AND YOU'LL EAT UP ALL THE CUP YOU EAT FROM THE E.O. FAN-ASSIST CLUB! SEE THE AD FOR THE INFO! DON'T FORGET! ENJOY YOURSELF! NO ONE ELSE DOES! BYE, NOW!

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TERROR



NO. 43
SEPTEMBER

TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT



10¢

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



Jack Davis

ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZDOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BLIZUNEN - SKONTCHSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...



... SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...



... AND MUNG POOR, MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!



- HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN STILL PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLEKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT YET...
- FOR THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR YOU!
- THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT COMIC BOOKS AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS NO COMIC BOOKS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS, SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING, AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.
- BUT WE ARE ASTOUNDED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY!

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

- WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! HERE! READ THIS:

THE COMMUNIST DAILY WORKER OF JULY 15, 1953
SAID THAT COMICS PLAY THE CONSCIOUS ROLE OF:

... BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

THIS ARTICLE ALSO QUOTES GERSHON LEGMAN (WHO CLAIMS TO BE A GHOST WRITER FOR DR. FREDERICK WERTHAM, THE AUTHOR OF A RECENT BLAST AGAINST COMICS PUBLISHED IN "THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL"). THIS SAME G. LEGMAN, IN ISSUE #3 OF "NEURONIC," PUBLISHED IN AUTUMN 1948, SAID:

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DIVERT HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS. THIS WILL SIPHON OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND PREVENT REVOLUTION."

- SO THE NEXT TIME SOME JOKER SETS UP AT A P.T.A. MEETING, OR STARTS JABBERING ABOUT THE "NAUGHTY COMIC BOOKS" AT YOUR LOCAL CANDY STORE, GIVE HIM THE ONCE-OVER. WERE NOT SAYING HE IS A COMMUNIST! HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE WHOLE THING! HE MAY BE A DUPE! HE MAY NOT EVEN READ THE "DAILY WORKER"! IT'S JUST THAT HE'S SWALLOWED THE RED BAIT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER!

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! HI, LOW-LIFERS! YEAH, IT'S YOUR LURID LIBRARIAN, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO OPEN ANOTHER SQUEAL-SESSION HERE IN THE CRYPT WITH ANOTHER OF MY FAVORITE TWISTED-TALES OF TORMENT AND TORTURE. SO, COME ON IN AND SIT DOWN ON THAT BLOOD-STAINED STONE MARKER THERE AND I'LL BEGIN THE YELP-YARN I CALL...

FOUR-WAY SPLIT



ROY DIXON AWOKE WITH A START, KNOWING SOMETHING WAS WRONG. HE OPENED HIS PUZZLED EYES, LOOKED AROUND BLANKLY, . . . AND SCREAMED. WHERE WAS HE? WHAT WAS THIS COLD GREY STONE ROOM THAT BOXED HIM IN LIKE A TRAPPED ANIMAL? WHAT WAS THAT STEADY HISS, LIKE A THOUSAND VENOMOUS REPTILES? WHY WAS HE BOUND HELPLESSLY TO THIS IRON CHAIR? HE STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY, BUT THE ROPES ONLY BRUDED HIS FLESH. HIS THROAT WAS TORN RAW BY HIS WILD PLEADING SCREAMS THAT ONLY DEAFENED HIS OWN EARS...

PLEASE! HELP ME, SOMEBODY! LET ME OUT OF HERE! YA AAAAAHHHHH...



BUT ROBOP CAME TO RELEASE ROY FROM HIS NIGHT-MARSH TRAP, AND HE SEEMED TO HEAR A GHOSTLY HOLLOW-TONED VOICE ECHO AND REVERBERATE THROUGH THE PRIMEROOM...

I SENTENCE YOU, ROY DODOR, TO EXECUTION IN THE GAS CHAMBER FOR FIRST-DEGREE MURDER...

O-GAS CHAMBER IF NO NOT LET ME OUT! THIS IS WRONG!

NOW THE WILLYS SQUEAMING PRISONER COULD SEE... SIMPLY... THE HOODED FIGURE PRIMING IN AT HIM IMPAS-SIBLY THROUGH THE OBSERVATION WINDOW, REGULATING THE FLOW OF LETHAL CYANIDE GAS THAT HISSED FROM THE GRILLED VENT IN THE FLOOR. HIS EXECUTIONER...

NOT IT CAN'T FEEL THIS IS WRONG! NOT THE WAY I PLANNED IT AT ALL! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! IT'S A MISTAKE! PLEASE!

OH, LORD... STOP HIM!



BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER FROM THE HOODED WATCHER. ROY DODOR'S BRAIN CLODED NOW. HIS EYES REELED CRAZILY AS THE DEADLY VAPORS WERE ABSORBED FROM HIS HEAVING LUNGS INTO HIS RAGING BLOODSTREAM. HIS CHIN SANK... HIS HEAD LOLLED. HE WAS DYING...

THIS... IS ALL WRONG! IT... CAN'T BE... TRUE!



WAS IT A DREAM? A HORROR NIGHTMARE? IT MUST BE THAT! ROY CLUNG TO THAT REASSURING THOUGHT AS THE STRIKE ROOM SPUN AND FIRED BEFORE HIS BLURRING EYES. DREAMLY, HIS MEMORY REACHED BACK, BACK TO THE RAW, RED DAYS OF WORLD WAR II WHEN HE AND BUCK BISHOP HAD BEEN IN FIGHT BUDS...

BOMBARDOER TO PILOT TARGET'S DEAD AHEAD!

PILOT READ FOR BOMBING TO GET 'EM!



OF COURSE, THAT DONT OF THIS HAD BEEN DURING OFF-DUTY HOURS. ON DUTY, IT WAS CAPTAIN BUCK BISHOP, PILOT, AND SECOND LIEUTENANT ROY DODOR, BOMBARDOER... AND NO MORE...

SHARE THE LEAD OUT LIEUTENANT! THERE'S A WAR ON! REMEMBER?

BUCK!... VICKI, DONT



ONCE IN THE AIR, SWINGING HIS ROARING METAL MONSTER, PRETTY WITH BOMBS, BUCK HAD ALWAYS BEEN ALL SPADS RIGHT THROUGH TO HIS STEEL-ROLLING BOMB...

PILOT TO BOMBARDOER: THIS IS A PRIME THREE... TARGET TONIGHT! UNDERSTAND? DON'T MISS... OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE MY SHIP AGAIN...



YEAH, THAT'S BEEN BUCK... PULLING RANK, BROWBEATING THE CREW, BLOWING IN HIS SILVER BARRIED AUTHORITY. BUT ROY RIBBED IT IN 2000, MAKING BUCK SQUEAMING PUNE HELPLESSLY WHEN HIS CHANCE CAME - ON THE BOMBING RUN, WHEN HE WAS IN COMMAND...

TARGET SIGHTED! TAKING OVER, CAPTAIN STEADY, MOR STEADY... OUT LIEUTENANT! THAT SHOT-SLIP, HEAR ME? THAT'S AN ORDER, CAPTAIN!



BUT THEN, BETWEEN MESSIN', THEY'D
SEEN THICK AS THIEVES AGAIN...
BUYING EACH OTHER DRINKS AND
PLANNIN' THEIR FUTURE...AFTER
THE WAR...

THINK' OF IT, BOY...DOME
OWN AIRLINE...HAILING
AIR FREIGHT...YOU
AND ME...PARTNERS!
ALL WE'D NEED IS ONE
SURPLUS FOUR
ENGINE JOB TO
GET STARTED!



AND SO, ONE GLORIOUS POST-WAR
MORNING, THEY'D STOOD PROUDLY
BEFORE THEIR QUINN'S HANGAR...
BUSINESS PARTNERS.

THE BUCKAROO AIRLINES
UNFOLDS ITS
SILVER WINGS
TA-DA-DAH!

CAN THE CLOWN
END, BOY? WE'VE
GOT A
MORTGAGE TO
PAY OFF OR THAT
OLD RECORDING
S-SET?
LET'S GET
TO WORK...



FINALLY, AFTER WEEKS OF LEG WORK,
THEY'D LANDED THEIR FIRST CON-
TRACT, AND FLYING THEIR FIRST LOAD
HAD BEEN JUST LIKE OLD TIMES...TOO
MUCH LIKE OLD TIMES.

NO LOAFIN',
BOY! GET BACK
AND CHECK
THE CARGO!
STILL PULLIN'
RAKE, BUCK
THE WANTS OVER
GUMP REMEMBER
THAT? WERE
PARTNERS!



ROY LIFTED HIS HEAD BROODIN'. THE PAINT FACED THE
HISSES OF THE LETHAL GAS WAS GONE...

I'M ALIVE! THE GAS CHAMBER HAS VANISHED!
IT WAS A DREAM! IT'S DAWN NOW I'M AWAKE!
I KNEW THEY NEVER BROUGHT ME TO TEXAS...
NEVER SENTENCED ME TO THE GAS CHAMBER.
I KNEW! IT WAS ALL A DREAM...



THE NOOSE STEADILY TIGHTENED, CLAMPING HIS MIND
PIPE SHUT FROM THE WEIGHT OF HIS BODY. SOMETIMES
THIS SHARPLY THROWN HAPPENED...THE VICTIM'S NECK
UNBROKEN BY THE DROPPING TRAP...LETTING HIM DIE
A SLOW HORRIFYING DEATH BY STRANGULATION. JUG-
GING HIM INTO A SUCCUMBLING ETERNITY...



NOT NOW! YOU CAN'T NAME ME!
I ESCAPED THE LAW! THIS IS A
DREAM, I'M SURE! ANOTHER
HORRIBLE DREAM...

BUT WHAT WAS THREE? WHAT WAS THIS NEW TORTURE BOY
WAS SUDDEDLY AWAKE OFF WHAT WAS IT SO HARD TO WAKE
WHAT WAS AROUND ROY'S HEAD...SQUEEZIN', SQUEEZIN'...

OH, LORD! I'M ON A
SCAFFOLD! THIS IS A
CHOKE...NOOSE AROUND
MY NECK! I'M DROWNED
IN MY OWN BLOOD!



ROY'S MIND BANKED INTO A DEEP DARK POOL AGAIN OUT OF
WHICH PUFFED VISIONS OF THE PAST CAME ONCE MORE...
REVIEWING HIS ASSOCIATION WITH BUCK BORSON. EVEN
THOUGH THEIR AIRLINE EXPANDED THROUGH THE YEARS,
UP INTO GOLDEN BRACKETS, BRACKETS KEPT IT UP, HATEFULLY,
PULLING BANK...

CANCEL THIS PETERSON
CONTRACT, BOY! IT'S NO
GOOD! IT WON'T PAY!
IT IS GOOD! IT WILL PAY!
LISTEN, BUCK! DANCE AND
FOR ALL, I'M NOT A BORED
HAND OR THE PATROLL! I'M AN
EQUAL PARTNER! UNDERSTAND?



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D WARNED HIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

I MEDIATED THAT CONTRACT MYSELF, BUCK, AND I'M SICK AND TIRED OF YOUR BULLSHIT. TRY IT ONCE MORE AND, SO HELP ME, I'LL PULL OUT OF THIS PARTNERSHIP!

GO AHEAD, BUT ANYTIME YOU WANT TO CALL IT BOUTÉ IS GREAT WITH ME! IF YOU CAN'T PLAY IT MY WAY, JUST SAY THE WORD! SOMEBODY'S GOT TO BE BOSS HERE AND RUN THINGS RIGHT!

AND ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D PUNCHED AND SNARLED PHYSICALLY, FINALLY COMING TO THE STARK REALIZATION...

SO THAT'S HIS NAME! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE IT SO UNPLEASANT FOR ME, I'LL PULL OUT AND LEAVE HIM TO HIS OWN BONANZA!

WELL, THIS GAME CAN BE PLATED BOTH WAYS! OF COURSE, WHY NOT? WHY NOT JUMP IF I CAN GET HOW TO PULL OUT, TURN THE TABLES... THE WHOLE DEAL WOULD BE MINE! BUT HOWTHOM COULD I GET RID OF HIM? I'VE GOT TO THINK OF A WAY...



AND SO, HIS ULCERIZED HATRED FOR HIS PARTNER HAD ROTTED LIKE CAUSTIC INTO ROY'S SOUL AND HE'D ELIMINATED ALL HOPES TO HIS BUCKY AIRLINES OF BUCK HORNIN, ALL BECAUSE, THAT IS, EXCEPT ONE...

MURDER! I'VE GOT TO KILL HIM! IT'S THE ONLY WAY!



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D STUDIED THE WALL MAP AND DECIDED...

THEY SAY THAT "MURDER WILL OUT"! A MURDER CAN NEVER BE CONCEALED! SO... I WON'T CONCEAL IT! I'LL PLAY IT STRAIGHT-OUT IN THE OPEN! AND HERE'S WHERE THE LAW WORKS BEST FOR THE FIRM: PLUS MY MARITIME TRAINING PAYS OFF!



ROY ALWAYS HANDLED THE "DIRTY WORK" FOR THE AIRLINE... THE LAW CASES THAT HAD COME UP FROM TIME TO TIME. HE'D EVEN TAKEN LAW COURSES AT NIGHT TO HELP. NOW, HIS LAW WORK WOULD HELP HIM TO COMMIT MURDER... AND GET AWAY WITH IT...

THESE FOUR STATES: UTAH, ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, AND COLORADO, ALL COME TOGETHER... HERE... AT ONE COMMON POINT AND THAT'S IF A FOUR STATE BOUNDARY OVER ONE CERTAIN MURDER!

AND SO, ROY'D PREPARED AND WAITED... AND HIS OPPORTUNITY COME ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE OFFICE HAD BEEN HOME AND BUCK WHO WORKED LATE, SETTING A NIGHT AIR-FREIGHT SHIPMENT DISCHARGED OUT...

WHO'S THERE? IT'S STILL THE BOSS, OH, BUCK! BUT I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME WITH THE OTHERS. WELL, SCRAM... I'M BUSY!



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D RAISED THE MONKEY WRENCH... BRINGING IT DOWN ACROSS BUCK'S HEAD CAREFULLY... EASY... NOT TOO HARDO... NOT HARD ENOUGH TO KILL HIM... NOT FET...

...THAT WAS YOUR LAST ORDER! YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP...

OUT INTO THE DARKNESS, ROYD CARRIED BUCK'S UNCONSCIOUS FORM... INTO THE REAR DOOR OF THE HANGAR... TO THE SURPLUS B-25 THEY STILL USED FOR SHORT FREIGHT HAULS... SHORT NIGHT HAULS... LIKE THE ONE TOYONKE.

ALL LOADED UP... READY TO GO... MONKEY'S TO CHECK THE CARGO HOLD NOW? ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SHUNT A FEW CRATES... AND I'M SET...

IT'D BEEN SO EASY... TYING BUCK UP, SADDLING HIM IN CASE HE'D COME TO, AND STRAPPING HIM UP ONTO THE OLD BOMB PACKS...



...THEN STOWING THE OTHER ITEM, THE ITEM ROYD BOUGHT AND RECONDITIONED CAREFULLY... THE GUN... PLUS BOMBONIUM... INTO THE CLUTTERED NOSE OF THE OLD SUPPORT...



...AND WAITING AROUND TILL THE GROUND CREWS THUNDERED THE OLD LADY OUT ONTO THE FIELD AND WARMED UP HER ENGINES. IT'D BEEN SO EASY TO DUMP INTO BUCK ON THE PILOT...



AND AS THEY'D BOARED WEST, IT'D BEEN SO EASY FOR ROY TO PRETEND A WAR HERO'S RESTAURANT...

YOU KNOW, BATSON? IT'S JUST COME OVER ME! I'D LIKE TO MAKE LIKE A BOMBARDIER AGAIN... FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE. I'M GOING FORWARD INTO THE NOSE. FOLLOW MY ORDERS ON THE INTERCOM. JUST LIKE YOU'RE MY PILOT. AND WE'RE HEADED OVER BERLIN! AND STOP GRINNING!

I'M... I'M NOT SORRY, MR. BATSON! I UNDERSTAND...

IT'D BEEN SO EASY TO UNCOVER THE BOMB-SHOT AND PLUG IN THE LEADS. HE'D WORKED ON FOR WEEKS. THE LEADS THAT CONTROLLED THE AILERONS... THE ELEVATORS... THE Rudder. THE BOMB-SAYS. AND THE BOMB-PACKS. THE BOMB-ROUN...

ALL RIGHT, BATSON! LET'S HEAD HER AROUND TO A READING OF THREE DEGREES SOUTH BY WEST...

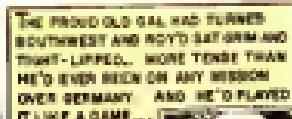
BUT THAT'S OFF COURSE, MR. BATSON!





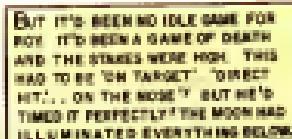
NOT YET I JACKED OFF,
BATTSON. JUST PLAT
ALONE AND HONOR
YOUR BOSS, HURT!

OKAY, MR.
SHOOT! IT'S
YOUR GASP!



BOMBARDIER
TO PILOT: TAKE
HER DOWN TO 1000
FEET. HEADING
IS DEGREES, SOUTH
BY SOUTHWEST.

YES,
SIR!



TARGET SIGHTED! ILL
BUT,
SIR,
BATTSON
LET GO
OF THE CONTROLS!



THE BOMB BAY HAD OPENED. RUCYD LOOKED
DOWN AND TRIED TO SCREAM BUT THE BAR HAD
HELD. FINE CROSS HAIRS HAD MOVED SLOWLY
TOGETHER. AND THEN...

BOMB AWAY!



DOWN AND DOWN. THE HARB
BOMB HAD HURLED



AND THE MEMORY PASSED AS
THE CONstrictor AROUSED
ROY'S THROAT EASING AND AIR
RUSHED INTO HIS LUNGS IN
REAT BREATHING SPLUTS...

I...I'M ALIVE AGAIN! I'M
NOT HANGING ANYMORE THE
MOOSE IS GONE! T...I
WAS DREAMING AGAIN.



SUDDENLY, THERE WAS DARKNESS AGAIN FOR ROY.
NOW, WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S THIS 10000 GROW-
PUN OVER MY HEAD? WHERE AM I BEING PUNCHED DOWN
INTO THIS CRACK? WHY ARE THEY STRAPPING ME
UP? IT'S WHAT...WHAT...OH, LORDY!



...AND ONCE AGAIN HE HEARD THE SAME HOLLOW EXECUTION-
ER'S VOICE AS THE SWITCH WAS THROWN.

I SENTENCE YOU, ROY
BATTSON, TO DEATH BY
ELECTROCUATION!

NO! OH, SOD! NO!
IT'S THE ELECTRIC
CHAIR!



THE FIRST JOLT RIPPED INTO ROY GORDON LIKE A MILLION WHITE-HOT NEEDLES... BOILING HIS BLOOD. HE COULD SMELL HIS OWN FLESH BURNING. THE SECOND JOLT SPIRALLED HIM INTO A BLUE-WHITE FLASHING ABSYSS THAT CHANGED HIM INTO A FIGURE OF THE PAST... OF BUCK GORDON'S BODY SMASHING TO EARTH DIRECTLY UPON A LARGE, FLAT STONE MARKER...

HE'S ON TARGET...



YES, IT HAD BEEN 'RIGHT OR WRONG', ROY'S FIN-FORT BOMBERS HAD DROPPED BUCK GORDON ON THE STONE MARKER THAT DELIMITES THE COMMON CORNERS OF UTAH, COLORADO, ARIZONA, AND NEW MEXICO... STUNNING IT RED WITH BLOOD AND RUPTURED FLESH...



IT HAD ALL BEEN ACCORDING TO PLAN. ROY'S OPENLY AND BOLDLY PLEASED GUILTY TO THE GRAND JURY'S INVESTIGATION. BUT THEN THE FIVE HAD STARTED AS THE REPRESSION TATHES OF THE COURTS OF FOUR STATES: WRANGLLED LIKE ALLEY-CATS OVER ONE MOUSE...

UTAH CLAIMS
JURISDICTION IN
THIS MURDER
CASE.

ARIZONA
CLAIMS
THE RIGHT
TO TRY THE
PRISONER.

NEW COLORADO
CLAIMS
MEXICO.

A LEGAL BRAWL HAD DEVELOPED. BUCK GORDON HAD MET HIS DEATH AT THE FOUR MUTUAL CORNERS OF THESE STATES. EACH ONE DEMANDED ITS RIGHT TO PROSECUTE, CLAIMING SOLE JURISDICTION. ROY'D BEEN ABLE TO HAVE HIMSELF RELIEVED ON BLOODLESS BARS, VIA A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS...

THIS WILL DRAG THROUGH COURT AFTER COURT, AT ANY DECISION TO TRY ME... IT'L APPEAL, THIS WILL GO ON FOR YEARS! I CAN APPEAL, RIGHT UP TO THE SUPREME COURT!



AND ROY'D BEEN ANGRY! HIS PLAN HAD WORKED EXACTLY AS HE'D PROGNOSTICATED IT WOULD. THE TAPE HAD PULLED UP, TANGLING INTO A THICKER AND MORE COMPLICATED KNOT...

FOUR STATES... EVERGREENS... EACH STUBBORN, JEALOUS... PROUD! THEY'LL NEVER BRING ME TO TRIAL... AT LEAST NOT IN MY LIFETIME!



THE MEMORY FADES, THE PAINFUL JOLTS OF ELECTRICITY WERE GONE. ROY LOOKED AROUND. IT WAS DARK NOW, DAWN OVER A DESERT WASTELAND...

I... I'M AWAKE AGAIN! I CAN'T BE ELECTROCUTED! OH, GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? WHY AM I BEING TORTURED LIKE... LIKE... AND WHAT AM I DOING AGAIN?



ROY LOOKED DOWN. HE WAS STANDING ON A FLAT ROCK - A MARKER - A FAMILIAR MARKER.

THIS IS WHERE BUCK'S BODY LAMED. I MUST BE DREAMING AGAIN! THIS IS NO DREAM!



THE HOODED FIGURE STOOD BEIDE THE MARKER.

YOU AGAIN THE EXECUTIONER! BUT THEN I MUST BE DREAMING! I'M A FREE MAN! THE COURTS DIDN'T DECIDE ANYTHING! THEY WOULDN'T FOR YEARS SO YOU CAN'T BE MY OFFICIAL EXECUTIONER!



THE HOODED FIGURE POINTED TO THE GREY WALLED STRUCTURE WITH THE LITTLE OBSERVATION WINDOW.

YOU ESCAPED LEGAL EXECUTION BY YOUR DARING PLAR, BUT YOU ESCAPED THE GAS CHAMBER OF THAT STATE. SO I LET YOU ONE A LITTLE UN...



THE HOODED FIGURE SWEEP HIS ARM. YOU ESCAPED THE SCAFFOLD OF THAT STATE - SO I LET YOU TRY THAT ONE TOO...



IN A CIRCLE POINTING. YOU ESCAPED THE ELECTRIC CHAIR OF THAT STATE... AND SO YOU'VE FELT WHAT IT IS TO DIE THAT WAY!



...POINTING TO THE LONG SHADOWS ON THE DAWN DESERT SAND...

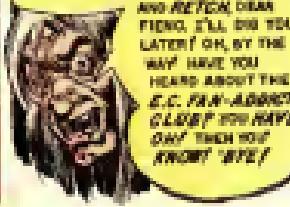
AND NOW FOR THE LAST TWO NOW AND FORMAL EXECUTION. THIS IS THE ONE I WILL NOT CALL SOMEONE'S DREAM - JUST A 'TASTE' OF THE FIRING SQUAD! READY... AIM...



BUT THE EXECUTIONER REMOVED HIS HOOD... AND ROY SAW THAT THIS WAS NO DREAM...



HEH, HEH! SO POOR OLD ROY GOT IT FROM ME... FOUR MAJOR/WELL, FOLD SET IT FROM E.C. FOUR THIS WHEN YOU READ ONE OF YOUR GHOULIGANIS MASS: FOUR CHILLING SCREAM-STORIES. WHAT COMES NEXT WITH HIS... THEN I'LL BE BACK TO RE-REVIEW YOU AND G.W. WILL COMPLETE THE CREEPY QUARTET. TO READ ON AND RETAIN, DEAR FRIEND, I'LL SEE YOU LATER! OH, BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB? YOU HAVE? ONLY THEN YOU KNOW 'BYE!



THE VAULT OF HORROR![®]

HEART AND A HORRIBLE SWY TO ALL YOU HORROR-HAPPY HONKERS! WELCOME NOW TO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR NARRATOR OF MAULATING NOVELLETTES, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO READ ANOTHER REVOLTING PROSEBITION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LESHEROUS LITERATURE. THIS FEAROR-TOME, THIS SHOCKO-CHAMO OF CHILLING CHAMOEL CHATTER IS APTLY ENTITLED...

COLD WAR

THERE WAS A BITTER FROST IN THE LATE NOVEMBER NIGHT AIR WHICH HUNGERED ABOUT THE LAST REMAINING FALL FLOWERS, BESLOWING MY KISSES OF DEATH UPON THEIR SHRIVELING PETALS. THE LEAVES HAD LONG SINCE LEFT THE TREES, JAVING THEIR SNARLED TRUNKS TO THE COMING WINTER WINDS, UNCOVERING BRANCHES THAT REACHED SKYWARD LIKE TWISTER AND MESSAPEA BOUT-WRACKED FINGERS. THEREIN IN THAT GARDEN OF GLOOM, SAT THE WIFE AND THE LOVER, AND ON THE GREY COLD FLAGSTONE TERRACE STOOD THE HUSBAND, WATCHING... AND WAITING.

YOUR ARMS ARE LIKE AVE MARIA. PLEASE, NORMAN...
LET ME SET YOU YOUR WRAPS...
DO THAT! I AM...
DOO-DY!
MY DARLING...



THE MOMENT NORMAN KING HAD MET MARIA HOLTY, THE PARTY GOING ON WITHIN THE HOUSE BEYOND, HE'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER. HE'D WAITED TILL SHE WAS ALONE... THEN COASSED HER INTO THE GARDEN, BRAZENLY FLAUNTING HIS ATTENTIONS UPON HER IN FRONT OF HER STONE-FACED HUSBAND. NORMAN NORMAN PASSED PAUL HOLT, HE NOTICED HIS PHYSICAL SMILE...



NORMAN HAD NOTICED THE COLD AND IMPRESSIVE IMPERIUM THAT HAD SEEMED TO BLANKET MARIA AND PAUL AND HE'D ASSUMED THAT THE PASSION-FIRES HAD COOLED FOR THEM. SO HE'D SET HIS SIGHTS UPON THE POOR UNHAPPY WIFE, DETERMINED TO STIR UP THE FLAMES WITH HER ONCE AGAIN... FOR HIM, HE GOT MORE THAN MARIA'S WRAP FROM THE CLOAKROOM...



HE FINISHED THE SHIN-MOLED BLUE-BLACK OB AUTOMATIC RIFLE TAKEN FROM HIS OVERCOAT, AND IT GAVE HIM CONFIDENCE...

I ALWAYS GET WHAT I WANT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, AND I'VE NEVER WANTED ANYTHING OR ANYBODY OF THE WAY I WANT... MARIA HOLT!



WHEN NORMAN RETURNED TO THE GARDEN, PAUL WAS GONE...

NOW'S OUR CHANCE, MARIA. LET'S GO SOMEPLACE... ANYPLACE... JUST SO LONG AS IT'S AWAY FROM HERET I WANT TO BE ALONE WITH YOU.

OH... I DON'T, NORMAN. FEEL WOLO WORRY! BEIDES, WE ARE ALONE OUT HERE, ARENT WE?



NORMAN TOOK MARIA IN HIS ARMS... TRIED TO KISS HER... DON'T TALK TO MARIA, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. I'M MADLY, HELPLESSLY IN LOVE WITH YOU!

PLEASE, NORMAN, DON'T PLEASE... YOU KNOW I'M MARRIED...



I HAVE EYES, MARIA! I CAN SEE YOUR HUSBAND AND YOU ARE LIKE TWO STORMS! THE LOVE THAT WAS ONCE BETWEEN NORMAN AND YOU IS DEAD! WHAT IF YOU AREN'T MARRIED... IF YOU HAD NO HUSBAND? COULDN'T YOU CARE FOR ME?

WHAT'S THE USE IN SUP- POSING, THAT THIS ONCE BETWEEN NORMAN AND YOU IS DEAD? WHAT IF YOU AREN'T MARRIED... IF YOU HAD NO HUSBAND?



SUDDENLY MARIA TURNED AND RAN TOWARDS THE HOUSE...

... AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT!

MARIA! COME BACK!



MARIA DISAPPEARED THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS AS PAUL HOLT'S JEERING LAUGHTER RANG OUT FROM THE FAR END OF THE GARDEN...

YES, MR. EMAN! THERE'S ANYTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT...

WHY YOU DIRTY, SNEAKING... YOU WERE HIDING THERE IN THE SHADOWS ALL THIS TIME... LISTENING!



NORMAN'S HAND WENT TO THE LOADED AUTOMATIC IN HIS POCKET AS THE SHEERING HUSBAND APPROACHED, AND HIS FACE FLUSHED RED WITH HATE AND ANGER AT THE AMUSED TWINKLE IN PAUL'S EYES...

DO YOU
COULDN'T
CREATE
HAR ABEK,
KING? WHAT
A PITY!
SHE SAID THERE
WAS NO USE SUP-
POSING, HOLT!
SHE SAID THERE
WAS NOTHING I
COULD DO ABOUT
YOU! WELL,
THERE IS!

NORMAN WHIPPED OUT THE GUN,
PRESSING THE COLD BLACK SNUBBED
MUZZLE AGAINST PAUL HOLT'S
CHEST. THE SHEERING SMILE VAN-
ISHED FROM PAUL'S FACE...

THERE'S THIS
I CAN DO! I
CAN KILL PAUL!
DON'T BE A
FOOL, KING!
BEFORE YOU
PULL THAT
PUNGER, LET
ME TELL YOU
WHY IT WON'T
DO YOU ANY
GOOD!

YOU'RE TRYING
TO STALL ME
TILL SOMEONE
SEES US, HOLT
WELL, IT DON'T
WORK!

NOBODY WILL
COME OUT IN
THIS GOLD,
KING! I MERELY
WANT TO TELL
YOU ABOUT MARIA
AND ME... AND OUR
ROMANCE. HOW
IT BEGAN...
EVERYTHING
BUT...

PAUL HOLT'S EYES NARROWED...

BUT, IF YOU'RE DETER-
MINED TO SHOOT,
DO ANEAD!

ALL RIGHTY
STAFF TALK-
INN, HOLT! BUT
MAKE IT QUIET!

CURIOSITY HAD GOTTHEN THE BETTER OF NORMAN. HE RELAXED A BIT
AS PAUL BEGAN HIS STORY, BUT HE KEPT THE GUN MUZZLE LEVELLED
AGAINST PAUL'S CHEST...

IT'S A STRANGERSH FRIGHTENING
STORY, NORMAN! IT BEGAN WHEN I
FIRST SAW MARIA. IT WAS A LITTLE
MORE THAN A DECAF AGO. SHE WAS
SURROUNDED BY SKELETONS AND
VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES...

SKELETONS?
VAMPIRES? WHAT
IN BLAZES ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

"YOU SEE, I'D GONE TO VISIT SOME RICH FRIENDS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI. THEY'D TAKEN ME TO A HALLOWEEN MASQUERADE
PARTY. MARIA WAS MADE UP AS A LITTLE SENSUOUS RED DEVIL. I
CAME AS A SCORCHON. I WAS ATTRACTED TO HER THE MINUTE I
SAW HER..."

NO FAIR LIFTING MY MASK TILL
AFTER MIDNIGHT!

BUT I'VE GOT TO SEE
IF THE FACE MATCHES
THE FIGURE...

"AT MIDNIGHT MARIA UNMASKED AND I UNMASKED
AND WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND KNEW. WE
KNEW WHAT ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA, AND
ROMEO AND JULIET, AND ALL THE OTHER LOVERS
DOWN THROUGH THE AGES KNEW..."

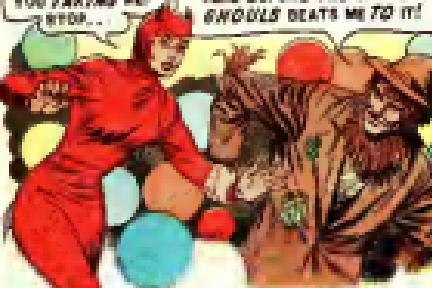
MARIA!

PAUL!



"I TOOK HER BY THE HAND AND PULLED HER AFTER ME THROUGH THE SWIRLING CROWD OF MERRY MONSTERS. SHE LAUGHED AND IT WAS LIKE THE Tinkle LINE OF SILVER BELLS..."

PAUL... WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? I'M GETTING TIRED OUT OF HERE BEFORE ONE OF THESE GHOULS BEATS ME TO IT!



"I TOOK HER IN MY ARMS AND TRIED TO KISS HER RIGHT THEN AND THERE, AS YOU JUST DID, NO PAUL, BUT, AS WITH YOU, SHE'D HAVE NONE OF IT..."

DON'T SAY NO, MARIA. THAT'S WHAT OUR LIVES WERE MADE FOR...

NOT NOW, PAUL! NOT YET! WE... WE DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER...



"IF YOU'RE PLAYING HARD-TO-GET, IT'S WORKING, MARIA. YOU'RE DRIVING ME MAD!"



"I'M PAUL HOLT, AND YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL AND NOW THAT WE KNOW EACH OTHER...



"IF YOU'RE ANGRY, PAUL... THERE ARE OTHER GIRLS... MUCH EASIER-TO-KISS GIRLS. PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER FORGET ABOUT ME!"



"OUTSIDE, MARIA STOPPED, SHIVERING. I LOOKED AT HER AND SHE WASN'T LAUGHING ANY MORE. FEAR LURKED IN HER EYES..."

DON'T TALK ABOUT GHOULS, PAUL! I... I DON'T LIKE THEM...

I... I'M AFRAID..."



"HURT E-E-I. I'M SORRY, HONEY! I DON'T MEAN... I WOULDN'T... WELL, I'LL NEVER MENTION THEM AGAIN!"

"SO I DON'T TRY. I GO ON WAITING, ALTHOUGH IT WASN'T EASY. THE NEXT EVENING, I TOOK HER TO DINNER. I TRIED TO HOLD HER HAND ACROSS THE TABLE, BUT SHE PULLED IT AWAY BEFORE I COULD TOUCH IT..."



"NOT EVEN... IT WOULD BE BETTER WITH HOLDING MY HAND... AND THEN... ANOTHER..."



"MARIÁ AND HER PARENTS LIVED IN A LARGE OLD HOUSE OUTSIDE PORT-AN-PRINCE, WHEN I WENT TO SEE THEM THAT NIGHT, THEY SAT STIFFLY ACROSS A DRAWING ROOM THAT MUST HAVE BEEN FURNISHED IN 1880, THEIR ATTIRE FITTED THE SUBSEQUENCE."

"I'VE COME TO ASK FOR YOUR PERMISSION TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER, MR. HOLT. WHAT ARE YOUR CONDITIONS, MR. HOLT?"

"MR. AND MRS. HARMON!"

"MY QUALIFICATIONS? I HAD TO CONTROL MYSELF TO KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE. YOU'D THINK I WAS APPLYING FOR A POSITION INSTEAD OF ASKING TO MARRY THEIR DAUGHTER."

"BUT I HAVE DUST A BIT OF MONEY, SINCE A GOOD EDUCATION. MY OWN BUSINESS..."

"NONE, MR. HOLT, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO CARE FOR MY DAUGHTER?"



"EVER HIS IDEAS OF GALLANTRY WERE VICTORIAN, I SUPPRESSED MY AMUSEMENT AND GAVE THE ANSWER HE WAS LOOKING FOR..."

"I'D GIVE MY LIFE FOR MARIÁ WITH- OUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, SIR!"

"ART THEN YOU HAVE OUR PER-MISSION, YOUNG MAN!"

"OH, PAUL, PAUL, I'M SO HAPPY!"

"TO MY SURPRISE, MR. HARMON, SAID WE COULD BE MARRIED THE VERY NEXT DAY, SO MARIÁ AND I WERE WED IN THAT COLD BALKAN CHAMBER BY A LOCAL OFFICIAL."

"I NOW PROFERRE YOU MAN AND WIFE!"

"NOW YOU MAY KISS YOUR BRIDE, SON!"

"MR. HARMON SPUNNED, BUT MARIÁ PERMITTED ME TO DO NO MORE THAN BRUSH HER COLD LIPS WITH MINE. I BLAMED IT ON SHYNESS BEFORE HER PARENTS, I LONGED TO CRUSH HER IN MY ARMS..."



"WHEN THE OFFICIAL THAT HAD MARRIED US HAD DONE, MARIÁ TURNED TO HER FATHER. MR. HARMON TOOK A SMALL SILVER CASE FROM HIS WAISTCOAT POCKET AND REMOVED A SINGLE WHITE TABLET..."

"GIVE IT TO ME, YOUNG HUMPHREY! WHAT AS IT? IT SMELLS LIKE SWALLOW, FOAMY MEDICINE!"

"THIS!"

"MARIÁ LOOKED AT ME REASSURINGLY, AND WHISPERED..."

"SWALLOW IT, PAUL. SWALLOW IT! IT'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S SWALLOWINE!"

"SWALLOWINE? YOU SAY MARIÁ, THAT'S POISON! YOU'VE ONE WHAT'S THE IDEA? FOR MY DAUGHTER, PAUL!"



"I DROPPED THE DEADLY LETHAL TABLET AND BACKED OFF. MARIA KNEELT AND PICKED IT UP AND TRIED TO GIVE IT BACK TO ME. SHE PRESED HER HAND IN MINE. HER FLESH WAS COLD... COLD AS DEATH..."

"YOU'D GOT TO DIE FOR ME, PAUL DEAR... CHORUS! NOW YOU'VE GOT TO! OUR MARRIAGE CAN NEVER BE CONSUMMATED UNLESS YOU'RE LIKE I AM... LIKE MOTHER AND FATHER... UNLESS YOU'RE DEAD!"

"I SCREAMED AND BROKE FOR THE DOOR..."

"ZOMBIES! I'VE MARRIED INTO A FAMILY OF ZOMBIES!"



"THE DOOR WAS LOCKED... THE KEY GONE. I WHIRLED, CONFUSED. MY ONLY AVENUE OF ESCAPE WAS UP THE STAIRS..."

"PAUL! I LOVE YOU! I'VE GOT TO MAKE YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO DIE FOR ME TO HAVE YOU!"



"THERE WAS NO TIME TO THINK. ONLY TO RUN. I SAW THE NARROW STAIRWAY LEADING UPWARD AND WITH A WILD FRANTIC SCRAMBLE, I STUMMLED UP INTO A MUSTY DUST-LADEN FOUL-SMELLING ATTIC. I REACHED THE SAME WINDOW IN THE JUNK-CRammed ROOM, THREW IT OPEN, AND STARED DOWN THREE STORIES TO A BRICK PATIO. I BLANDED BACK AS I CLIMBED TO THE SILL AND SAW MY ZOMBIE WIFE AND IN-LAWS THROUGH A HAZE OF SMOKE, COMING FOR ME... COMING... AND I HEARD MARIA'S PLEASING VOICE..."



"A CLEMENT CHILL CRIED ACROSS ME LIKE AN INVISIBLE HAND OF HOARFROST. NUMBLY, I MOVED BACKWARDS. THERE WAS A LOOK OF DEADLY IRM DETERMINATION ON THE FACES OF THE ZOMBIES AS THEY CAME SLOWLY AFTER ME..."

"THAT'S WHY I NEVER LET YOU TOUCH ME OR KISS ME PAUL! YOU HAVE FELT MY DEAD FLESH! TAKE THE FILE SO YOU CAN BECOME ONE OF US! I LOVE YOU!"

"I WANT YOU!"

"NO, OH, LERO, NO!"



"THE DOORS ON THE SECOND FLOOR WERE ALL LOCKED TOO. FOR A MOMENT, THEY TRAPPED ME THERE, THEIR COLD LIFELESS HANDS HOLDING ME IN A STEEL GRIP. BUT WITH A STRENGTH BORN OF SHODD TERRIBLE WRENCHED FREE..."



"OH, LERO..."

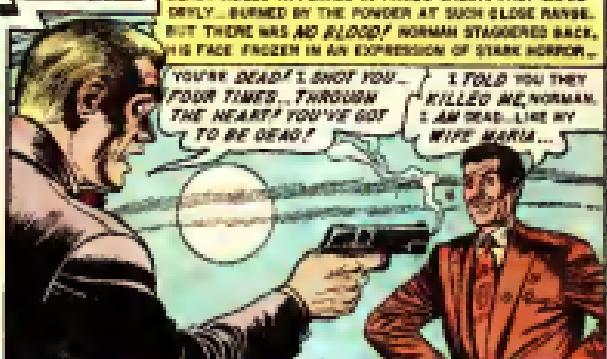
NORMAN KING LISTENED IN AMAZEMENT TO THIS TALE OF TERROR THAT POURRED FROM THE LIPS OF THE HUSBAND OF THE WOMAN HE WANTED SO DESPERATELY. HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE GUN IN HIS HAND, THE BULLETS BLED AT PAUL HOLT'S CHEST...



SUDDENLY NORMAN HEARD PAUL'S MOURNING LAUGHTER, SAW THE GLINT OF AMUSEMENT IN HIS EYES, AND NORMAN'S FACE FLUSHED SCARLET. HE SEETHED WITH RAGE, HIS FINGER TIGHTERED ON THE TRIGGER...



NORMAN SCREAMED IN FURY. HE SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER AGAIN AND AGAIN AS HE SHRIEKED...



PAUL HOLT'S COLD LIFELESS HANDS CAUGHT NORMAN KING'S THROBBING THROAT IN AN IRON DEATH-GRIP. HIS POWERFUL DEAD FINGERS CLAMPED TIGHTLY, CUTTING OFF NORMAN'S AIR SUPPLY. CUTTING OFF HIS LIFE...



HEN, HEN! AND THAT'S MY HELP, JARL! FOR THIS ISSUE OF OLE'S PUTIN PERIODICAL, OF COURSE, THE GHOST WAS ON NORMAN. FALLING FOR A GOLD BABE LIKE MARIA, BUT EVERYTHING'S ALL AWEET NOW. NORMAN'S BEEN ACCEPTED INTO ZOMBIE SOCIETY AND MARIA'S AWAYED HIM OFF ON A DISTANT COUSIN OF HERS. THIS GAL'S BEEN DEAD SO LONG, SHE AINS'T TO KEEP HER DISTANCE, ANYHOW. NORMAN'S HAPPY AS AN UNDERTAKER AT A PLANE CRASH WITH HER. SEEMS HE GOES FOR THE STRONG TYPE... JANE! JANE! THAT IS, AND, TALKING ABOUT STRONG SMELLIN', ILL TURN YOU BACK TO EWE, EWE, NOW!

INSIDE STORY



They couldn't be far behind, Finch realized. Of all the dumb luck . . . for years he'd snatched punks, and he'd never fumbled so badly as this time! His chest pounding as he rounded the corner, Finch knew that his two pursuers would be closing in on him in another minute!

He skidded to a stop suddenly. In the empty lot to his right some kids were fooling around an old ice box, which sagged ludicrously atop a mound of rubbish. One punk sat inside the enamel box, while the others yammered, pretending they were about to shut the door. It took Finch only a moment to see beauty in this sordid scene; the ice box was a better hideout than any other he'd find!

Finch slammed one kid when he processed against an adult joining their fun . . . the others calmed down fast. Hunching over, Finch pulled a five-spot from his pocket and the eyes around him grew big with anticipation. Finch swiftly tore the bill into two pieces. He handed one half of the bill to the skinny kid nearest him. "I'm gonna duck into the ice box, see?" he whispered. "Slam that door shut after I'm in . . . then just keep on playing. You get the other half when you open the door for me!"

While the kids chattered excitedly, Finch stepped into the box and manacled cork-screw fashion till he was able to squat down inside. "Okay!" he called. "When I rap on the side of the box, you open 'er up and get the other half of your reward! Now slam 'er closed!"

A tight fit, Finch thought, a smile on his face. It was dark, and already the perspiration was beginning to swim down the small of his

back. But sitting it out in the ice box was a lot cooler than sweating out a prison sentence!

The air was stale and it was hard to breathe . . . but those cops'd pass by in another moment, and he'd hop out and make a getaway!

While he squirmed inside the sealed box, two figures in blue raced around the corner. One of them pointed at the boys in the empty lot. At the same moment, the kids spotted the police. With a yelp of fear, the boys scattered, their legs thrashing frantically as they ran away. "They catch us here again," one boy grunted, "and they'll run us in! Last time they warned us to stay outta this lot, or we'd all go to jail!"

In another minute the boys were gone, and the police ran on. The lot was silent. Except for the deep-throated groaning inside the abandoned ice box.

After the footsteps died away outside, Finch pounded on the enamel side of the box . . . pounded till blood from his slashed knuckles ran down the slick surface. With all his strength he hurled himself against the door, but it held firm.

It was growing hot in the box . . . increasingly hard to breathe. Finch's fingers ripped his collar open, but it didn't help. There was a curious buzzing in his ears, and he found it painful to keep his eyes open. His heart was beating strangely in his chest, and the white-hot lump in his throat seemed to be growing . . . seemed to be filling his whole tormented body, as if it would soon burst. Just one breath of air, that's all he needed! Let the cops come and take him . . . let them throw him into solitary! Just let him gulp some air, and relieve the agony that was melting his insides! Air . . .



YOU, TOO, CAN MEET NEW FRIENDS! JOIN THE
E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!

SEND FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT TODAY! RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR, THIN 10% ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAD-RELIEF PIN.

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢ IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL!

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB

ROOM 106
325 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

Here's my two bits! I want the things
and stuff like the kid's wearing! I want
to meet newfriends like the kid's feeling!
I'm a fan-addict! I'm mad!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____

STATE _____

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Do everybody's "high fidelity" stay there days? Do who am I to stand in the way of progress? So snap on your ten watt all-transistor amplifier, flip on your re-rumble, non-tracking arms, four-speed, cork-and- record player with the diamond stylus variable resistance magnetic plug-in package deal, dust off your four-reflex cabinet with the explore bags containing the main 12 inch speakers, 6 cross-over networks, and 8 matched-in-series resistors... and lead a shattered car to the crystal-clear sounds research of these latest additions to the EC HORROR HIT PARADE (now inviting you at a flat response from 10 to \$4,000 cycles, plus or minus 903 ohm at maximum power, maximum bass level at 1000 revolutions per minute), as well as by Fred Field of Post Warholism, N. Y., Carl Nelson and Dolores Zastavnik of Detroit, Mich., Rod Massen and Jerry Sommers of Asbury, N. J.; 2 Allegany High School Gossips of Cleveland, Md., and Paul Black and Douglas Tachman of Elmhurst, L. I.

MAGGOTS GO WHERE MY FILED GUTS GO
 EAT ME IN ST. LOUIS, LOOKY STRANGINGS ARE HAPPENING
 SOME HAIR OVER MY SLAIN BEAU
 YOU MADE ME SHOVE YOU
 I'LL BREAK YOUR BONES AGAIN,
 KATHLEEN
 COMIN' THROUGH THE EYE
 DROWNED IN THE VALLEY
 YOU WERE BENT FOR ME
 SNOOK CITY SHREW
 HAGS TO WITCHES
 WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG
 MAGGOTS

Kennedy O'Brien and Tim O'Brien of no address; Steve Winkler of Detroit, Mich.; William Cobb of Philadelphia, Pa.; and Don Ponzio of N. Y. C. suggest the following PULPITING POKELAND:

HATCHET SQUAD
 ROAST OF THE TOWN
 FOUR SCAB PLAYHOUSE
 YOU BET YOUR WIFE
 PERRY'S IN A COMA
 MR. GIZZARD
 T.V. SCREAM CLUB
 SMELLIN' EDD'S FANG
 THE PHONE STRANGER
 I ATE THREE WIVES

Somebody over in the following LURID LYRACE:

THE HEARSE WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP
 from OKLAHOMACIDE

Ratt and bat and owl better dispense
 When I take you out in this hearse
 When I take you out in the black hearse
 With the fringe on top
 Watch that fringe and see how it flutters

As I drive the hearse through the garden
 Creepy folks will break through their shanties
 And their jaws will drop.

The driver's dead.

The upholstery's skin
 The dash-board'll drive you insane
 With a solid glam bottom

You can look right in
 In case you run over a pedestrian
 Two bright fog-lights out on the bender

Spare tank of blood if you go on a bender
 An unoccupied staircase who'll never descend

If you care to flop
 In that new little bummer
 With the fringe on the top

Al Filer of Portland, Ore. pens the PERVERTED PARODY to the tune of "Frere Jacques."

PROPOSED YOU'RE DRUNK, WHEN YOU'RE BLOODY

IT ISN'T VERY HARD TO DO
 AND YOU'LL FIND BLOOD WITHOUT AN END

WHENEVER YOU PLEASED
 REMEMBER, ANYONE CAN DRUNK
 AND ANYONE'S DRUNK IS AS IT MAY SEEM
 THE CLASS YOU HAVEN'T GOT COULD BE A LOT

IF YOU PLEASED
 YOU'LL FIND A BODY YOU CAN SHARE,
 ONE YOU CAN CALL ALL YOUR OWN
 JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES, BLOOD IS THERE.

YOU'LL SWING TO A SONG
 AND IF YOU SWING THIS SONG
 YOU'LL BE PRACTICING JUST LIKE ME
 THE BLOOD SINGE, IT CAN BE YOUNG, MY FRIEND,
 SO WHY DON'T YOU PLEASED

Clay Knobell of Drexler, N. C. reads me along with the PUTRID POETRY:

I used to be happy with a narcoleptic bag,
 Any old bag, and a drunken pig
 But now, no more,
 For that was before
 I read an EC mag
 Now I am sad and I posit
 Till an issue comes out
 They make me happy, even
 I EAT AGAIN!

COMMERCIALS. This after action with the other Perverted public consciousness' THREE DIMENSIONAL EC CLASSICS and THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR

15 each... 2 for 30¢! Subscriptions to TALES FROM THE CRYPT... use back right most Address for more terms of sale, or 3-D mag, or sub orders to:

The Crypt Keeper
 Room 706, Dept. 4
 225 Lafayette St.
 N.Y. 12, N.Y.

HERE'S A TALE OF BLOODY T.V.
PROGRAMMING! I CALL THIS DUD...

COOTS MY LINE



THE BURNING EYES LIGHTS BLAZED WHITE-HOT. THE RED SIGNAL ATOP THE EMMETTRO Camera BLINKED ON. HEADS AND CHAINS WITHIN THE CAMERA BEGAN TO WHIRR SORRY. ALL THE PREVIOUS BUSTLING AND MAD CONFUSION HAD SUDDENLY COME TO A HUSHED END. THE "COOTED" T.V. PROGRAM BEGAN, UNROLLED ONTO TAPE TO BE USED AT SOME FUTURE DATE, BY THE UNCTUOUS, SHAGGY VOICE OF ITS MASTER-OF-CEREMONIES, ALAN CHATFIELD...

"GOOD EVENING, FRIENDS. WELCOME TO OUR NETWORK'S NEWEST GAME...
"GUESS THE GUEST", A UNIQUE QUIZ GAME IN WHICH OUR PANEL
WILL ATTEMPT TO GUESS THE OCCUPATION OF OUR INVITED
GUEST..."



THREE BY...

MR. FERGIE DRAYTON SAT BEHIND THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES, SHIFTING NERVOUSLY. FROM TIME TO TIME HE GLANCED AT THE PANEL SITTING STERNLY ACROSS THE SMALL STUDIO STAGE...

"IF OUR PANEL FAILS TO NAME THE GUEST'S
SECRET OCCUPATION WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT,
HE RECEIVES A VALUABLE PRIZE..."



MR. CHATFIELD WOOGED TOWARD THE SLIM THREESOME OPPOSITE...

"OUR PANEL IS MEET EACH WEEK. GUESS THE GUEST IS NOT A CELEBRITY PROGRAM. WE BELIEVE IT IS MORE FUN TO HAVE THREE... WELL... AVERAGE PEOPLE LIKE FOUR-BELVED MATCH WITS WITH OUR GUEST. TONIGHT, ON OUR PANEL, WE HAVE MR. FALLEN PETERSON, NIGHT WATCHMAN... MISS ZELIA PRONK, HOME COOKER... AND MR. PAUL DARNELL, MAINTENANCE MAN..."



MR. PANEL, MEET OUR GUEST...
MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR. YOUR JOB
WILL BE TO DISCOVER MR. DRAYNOR'S OCCUPATION. WHAT HE
DOES! IN OTHER WORDS...
GUESS THE GUEST! FIRST,
WE'LL BURN WITH THE WILD
GUESSES! MISS PRONCEY?



MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR SAT IN THE
GUEST SEAT WITH AN AMUSED SMILE,
GLARING INSIDE. THEY NEVER
GUESS HIS OCCUPATION. IT WAS
SOMETHING THEY WOULDN'T EXPECT.
JUST TO LOOK AT HIM...



HIS HEAT CUTTER APPEARANCE... HIS
GREET VOICE... HIS RATHER WEAK AIR...
THERE WAS NOTHING OBVIOUS ABOUT
MR. DRAYNOR THAT WOULD GIVE HIS
OCCUPATION AWAY. MR. DRAYNOR WAS
BORN TO BURN THIS...



THEY WERE ALL WRONG... SO VERY WRONG. MR. DRAYNOR
LEERED SLYLY AT THE HUMMING KINESCOPE CAMERA,
HOUSING THE VAST AUDIENCE THAT WOULD VIEW THIS AT
SOME FUTURE TIME. AND HE REMEMBERED HOW HE'S
MET MR. CHATFIELD THAT NIGHT LAST WEEK... IN THAT
GIGANTIC LITTLE BABE-RIDE CAR HELL...

YOU AREN'T SURE, I'M AN EXP.
ON A NEW TV PROGRAM?
ER... HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO
APPEAR MR. DRAYNOR? IT'S
CALLED GUESS THE GUEST.
I'M SURE THAT YOUR OCCUPA-
TION WOULD FLOOR OUR
EXPERTS...



I'VE NEVER BEEN
ON TV. WHAT'S IT
LIKE? I MEAN...
THE PROGRAM?

WELL, 'GUESS THE GUEST' IS
A PANEL PROGRAM, MR. DRAY-
NOR. OUR PANEL HAS TO GUESS
YOUR OCCUPATION. WE
KINESCOPE IT, YOU KNOW...

PUT IT ON TAPE FOR A FUTURE
REBROADCAST OVER OUR NETWORK.

OH, I SEE! BECAUSE
I'M VERY NERVOUS
BEFORE AN AUDIENCE...



ON THERE'S NO STUDIO
AUDIENCE AT A KINESCOPE'
TAKE, MR. DRAYNOR. JUST
THE PANEL, MYSELF, THE
CAMERAMAN, AND... POOF!

THEN I'LL ACCEPT
YOUR INVITATION, MR.
CHATFIELD. I'D LOVE
TO HAVE YOUR CLEVER
PANEL TRY TO GUESS
MY OCCUPATION!



GOOD! JUST LET ME CHECK MY
SCHEDULES! YES! FINE!
WE'LL 'TAKE' YOU NEXT
TUESDAY NIGHT, AT
10:30 PM. HERE'S THE
ADDRESS, YOU'LL SEE
YOU'LL COME!

OH, I'LL BE
THEONE MR. CHATFIELD.
I WOULDN'T MISS
THIS FOR ANYTHING.



MR. DRAYTON'S THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT AS MR. CHATFIELD SMILED...

SORRY, WELL, MORE OF THE WILD PRODUCTS DO YOU DEAL ARE COMMON, FINALLY I'M A PRODUCT? SO WE MAY BEEN THE QUESTIONS, WELL, START WITH MISS PRONK!



THE QUESTIONS BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH... TOO INNOCENTLY MR. DRAYTON INNOCENTLY SWUNG THEM ON. MR. CHATFIELD SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THE PROCEEDINGS...

OH, YES, MISS PRONK! A VERY FASCINATING PRODUCT, SOMETHING WE COULD HARDLY DO WITHOUT...



MR. CHATFIELD HAD TOLD MR. DRAYTON HE COULD GO LIB OR EMBELLISH HIS TEE-OR-RO ANSWERS IF HE CARED TO, SO LONG AS HE DID NOT DELIBERATELY LIE. THAT WAS ALL RIGHT WITH MR. DRAYTON...

IS THIS A COMMON PRODUCT? I MEAN... HAVE I SEEN IT?



THEY PASSED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER, HAWWING IT DOWN, GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER MR. DRAYTON HAD HELPED THEM ALONG, SHRIKING TO HIMSELF. HE'S WANTED THEM TO GET CLOSE... VERY CLOSE, AND MR. CHATFIELD HAS JUST SAT BACK SMILING...

YOU SAY THIS IS A LIQUID PRODUCT, MR. DRAYTON. WHAT KIND OF A LIQUID?



MR. DRAYTON SAW THE Sudden TWITCH OF MISS PRONK'S LIPS NOW AS A GLUE LEAPED INTO HER MIND AND HER EYES WIDENED IN HORROR. MR. DRAYTON FRIED TO HER, HER VOICE WAS HESITANT... FEARFUL...



THEY LEANED FORWARD, HAMMING ON HIS ANSWER, BREATHLESSLY. DRAMATICALLY, DRAYTON HEADED. DELIBERATELY, HE LOOKED TO MR. CHATFIELD, WHO SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THE UNCOMFORTABLE TURN THE QUIE HAD TAKEN. MR. DRAYTON LICKED HIS LIPS, BEING CAREFUL TO KEEP THEM CAREFULLY GLODED AS HE ALREADY DID IN PUBLIC...



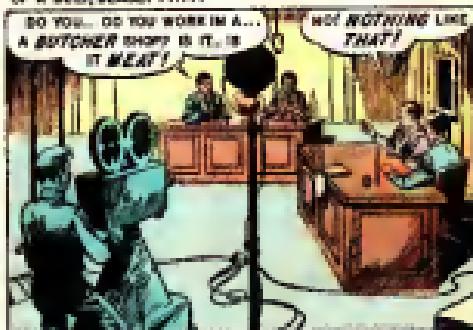
THE PANEL SAGGED IN UNISON, EXCHANGING STARTLED GLANCES. DRAYTON CHUCKLED SOFTLY, WHISPERING THAT OLD GLUE TO MR. CHATFIELD WHO NOODLED HAPPILY...



DESPERATELY THEY HURLED QUESTIONS AT HIM, HOPEFUL THEY WERE WRONG AT WHAT THEY SUSPECTED...



IT WAS DUNKEL'S TURN AGAIN, BUT HE WAS STILL AFRAID TO COME OUT WITH IT OPENLY. HE TRIED TO APPROACH IT IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY, LIKE A FEARFUL MAN SKIRTING THE EDGE OF A DEEP DEADLY PIT...



PETERS SEEMED TO BE MENTALLY BAGGED, EVADE THE DIRECT QUESTION LIKE SOME HORRIBLE THING LYING BEFORE HIM...



THEY WERE ALL BEATING AROUND THE BUSH, AFRAID TO NAME THE HIDEOUS OCCUPATION TORTURING THEIR MINDS. MISS FRONICH LOOKED PERTINENTLY ILL, AS SHE STAMMERED...



THE DRINKING, SIZZLING GUEST CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, FOR THEIR FULLEST AND MOST TANTALIZING MEANING. IT WAS SO DELIGHTFUL, WATCHING THE PANEL SWEAT AND SQUIRM.



MR. CHATFIELD'S EYES GLEAMED AS HE WARMED THE PANEL OF THE FLEETING TIME. IT WAS THE TRIUMPH HE'D PLANNED ALL ALONG. THAT'S WHY HE'D WANTED MR. GRAYHORSE AT NIGHT. IT ALL FIT IN SO NICELY. QUITE A LOWLY TORMENTING TIME...



THE PANEL SHRUNK NOW AS DRAUTHOR LEERED AT THEM, MOCKING THEM... DEFTLY THEM... DARING THEM TO PIN HIM DOWN. MR. CHATFIELD SAT BACK, WONDERING IF THEY'D HAVE THE MONEY...

WE'LL PAINLT ANOTHER
MORE QUESTIONS
DO YOU GIVE UP?
YOU HAVE ONE
MINUTE!

NOT BUTT'LL BE KNOWN!
WE ALL KNOW MR. DRAUTHOR
IS A... OH, NO... IT CAN'T
BE CHATFIELD! YOU
WOULDN'T DO THIS TO US!



MR. DRAUTHOR SQUEELED. MR. CHATFIELD LOOKED SURPRISED...



MR. CHATFIELD LAUGHED...

THIS MAN HAS A
LEGITIMATE OCCUPA-
TION! IF YOU CAN'T
GUESS IT, HE WINS!
HOW DO YOU CARE TO
MAKE A BET AT IT?

NO! A CRIMSY
TRICK! YOU'LL
HEAR ABOUT THIS!



MR. CHATFIELD TURNED TO MR. DRAUTHOR...

MR. FRENCH DRAUTHOR! YOU HAVE STUMPFED
OUR PANEL WITH YOUR OCCUPATION!
"MISS THE GUESS" IS PROUD TO
PRESENT ITS JACK-POT PRIZE...



...THIS SOLID GAY, HAND-MADE IN GOLD LINED,
BRASS NAILED CASKET... FOR YOU TO REST IN
ETERNAL REPOSE FOREVERMORE...

GULP...



A CASKET? SURE!
WHAT KIND OF A
PROGRAM IS
THIS?

YOU SEE, PANEL! MR.
FRENCH DRAUTHOR IS
A FA...





CHAFFIELD ROSE, STANDING OVER DRAYNOR, AND THE CAMERAMAN, TOO, LEFT HIS WHIRRING MECHANISM TO JOIN THE DROOLING PANEL MEMBERS AS THEY GLANCED TOWARD THEIR INVITED GUEST...

I KNEW YOU'D THINK, FOR THE HORRIBLE MINUTE, THAT HE WAS ONE OF US!

GOOD LORD!



THEY LOOKED OVER THE IRK MANUFACTURER, HENNING HIM IN, THEIR SHARP FANGS GLISTENING IN THE WHITE LIGHT FROM THE HOT KLEEN.

YOU SEE, MR. DRAYNOR! OH, NOT NOT WE ARE THE VERY FIRST!

YAAAAAH HEE



MR. DRAYNOR FLAILED AS THEY BENT OVER HIM, SINKING THEIR NEEDLE-SHARP FANGS INTO HIS FLESH... SUCKING... GULPING... DRAWING THE SCARLET LIFE-FLUID FROM HIS BREAKING BODY. AND JUST BEFORE THE DARKNESS CLOSED IN, DRAYNOR HEARD MR. CHAFFIELD RISE, Wipe his bloody mouth, and close the 'CHANNEL' SHOW...

BE SURE TO BE WITH US NEXT WEEK WHEN 'GUESS THE GUEST' IS PRESENTED BY THE SUPERNATURAL PRIVATE-TV NETWORK. OUR PROGRAM AT THAT TIME, WILL CONSIST OF A PANEL OF THREE AVERAGE BODIES AND ANOTHER UNsuspecting INVITED GUEST...



HEH, HEH! GUTE IDEA, EH, KIDDIE. HAVING A PRIVATE-TV NETWORK FOR THE BRAVE AND GALLANT? OF COURSE, IT'S BROADCAST OVER IRK-TV! THAT'S ULTRA-HORRIBLE FREQUENCIES! IN COLOR, TOO! ALL PRETTY FLESH-CRIMSON AND BLOOD, RED! AS FOR POOR MR. DRAYNOR... WELL, HE BET TO USE THE FANGS HE'S GOT! SOONER THAN HE EXPECTED, TOO! AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH WAITS WITH HER

MORSES MESS COOKING IN HER CROCKY CALL-DOWN! BY THE WAY, DID YOU JOIN THE E.O. FAN-ASSOCIATION YESTERDAY? I DON'T THINK SO!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE-HEE! AND NOW, IT'S *DELIRIUM DESSERT* TIME IN G.A.'S MORBID MUG-MAD... AND YOUR *SHREDDER* = ERIC, YOUR *FEVERING FRAPPE-FEEDER*, YOUR *SORDID SUNDAY-SLOPPER*, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY TO SPIN OUT HER LATEST COOL CAULDRON CONCOCTION. A DELIGHTFULLY ENJOYABLE TALE OF EVIL, EMBROIDERY AND CREEPY CROCHETORS AND HAUNTEATING KNITTING WHICH I CALL...

ACCIDENTS and OLD LACE

THE STILL NIGHT OUTSIDE THE BOARDING HOUSE WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY THE SICKENING IMPACT OF TWO TONS OF METAL AND RUBBER AND GLASS AND FLESH MEETING A SOLID WALL OF BRICK AND CONCRETE. THE Hateful SCREECHING OF BRAKES PRECEDED THE CRASH STILL ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT AS THE ROBBERS POURING OUT ONTO THE PORCH AND DOWN THE WOODEN STEPS. ERIC HOLMEN JOINED THEM AS THEY RUSHED TO THE MESS OF TWISTED FERSORS AND PULVERIZED MEN-GOONS, TORN MUSCLES AND SHATTERED BONE, AND THICK BLOOD THAT OZED FROM THE WRECK AND POOLED LIKE A SCARLET LAKE UPON THE COLD SIDEWALK...



ERIC HOLMEN STOOD WATCHING THE THREE OLD LADIES THAT SHARED THE HAD ROOM NEXT DOOR TO HIS. HE WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS THEIR MOUTHS DROPPED OPEN DRAINLY AND THEIR EYES GLAZED IN HORROR AND THE COLOR DRAINED FROM THEIR AGED AND WRINKLED FACES AS THEY BEHELD THE DEATH SCENE, AND ERIC HOLMEN SMILED...



HE WATCHED THEM TUMBLE IN DREAD
AND REVULSION AND SORRY LICKED
LAWNS OVER THE BOARDING HOUSE
LAWN TO THE SAFETY AND SANCTITY
OF THE IMPOSING STRUCTURE THAT
HAD BEEN THEIR HOME FOR THE PAST
TWELVE YEARS...



AND HE KNEW THAT SOON HE WOULD
HAVE ANOTHER FABULOUS TAPESTRY
TO SELL TO HIS FRIENDS, MILTON... A
TAPESTRY WHICH FEVERISHLY BY
THREE PAIRS OF GRIMMED AND HOR-
NOUS HANDS BURNED BY THREE PAIRS
OF MILKY BLOODSHOT EYES THAT
HAD LOOKED UPON THE HORROR OF
VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL DEATH...



AT THE HASTILY SUMMONED AMBUL-
ANCE BOREAWAY UP TO THE CRASH
SCENE IN ITS USELESS MERRY TRIP,
ERIC HOLBEN EASES HIMSELF INTO
A HICKORY PORCH ROCKER AND THOUGHT
BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF ALL THIS...
TO THAT VERY FIRST DAY HE'D COME TO
THE BOARDING HOUSE...

OF COURSE, MR.
HOLBEN I HAVE
A VERY COZY ROOM
VACANT, FIFTEEN A
WEEK... WITH MEALS...



ERIC HAD BEEN AN ART DEALER BACK IN NEW YORK.
HE HAD A SMALL GALLERY BUT IT HAD NEVER BEEN
VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE ARTISTS THAT HAD COME TO HIM
WITH THEIR CANVASES AND SCULPTURESS HAD NOT BEEN
TOO GOOD. HE'D BEEN FORCED TO CLOSE THE GALLERY
AFTER A WHILE. PEOPLE HAD STOPPED COMING TO BUY...



ERIC HAD INCORDED ABSURDLY TO THE THREE OLD LADIES
AND FIRED AT HIS FOOD, HIS THOUGHTS A MILLION MILES
AWAY. WHAT COULD HE DO NOW THAT HE'D COME TO MILL-
VILLE? HOW LONG COULD HE LAST UNTIL HIS MONEY RAN
OUT...



SO ERIC HAD COME TO MILLVILLE TO BEGIN AGAIN. HE'D
HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC IN MIND. HE'D JUST PACKED HIS
THINGS IN NEW YORK AND TAKEN A TRAIN WEST. AND WHEN HE'D BECOME TIRED OF RIDING, HE'D SOTTEN DOWN
AND IT'D BEEN AT MILLVILLE...

OH, I'M SORRY! THIS IS GRACE... AND
CHARLOTTE... AND EMMA LOU!
SALSBURY. THEY LIVE IN THE
ROOM NEXT DOOR TO YOURS...



GRACE! CHARLOTTE! EMMA
LOU! DID YOU HEAR MY
MR. HOLBEN IS AN ART
DEALER. YOU MUST
SHOW HIM YOUR
TAPESTRIES!



OH, MR.
HOLBEN
WOULDN'T
BE INTERESTED
JANET!



BUT THEN, HE'D SPIED THE TAPESTRY
THAT HAD BEEN ROLLED UP AND
ALMOST HIDDEN FROM VIEW AND HE
ABSENTELY TAKEN IT OUT OF THE
CLOSET AND SPREAD IT OUT...



THE SALSBURY SISTERS HAD SNATCHED THE TAPESTRY
FROM ERIC AND ROLLED IT UP AGAIN, APOLOGIZING.



BUT THE BRIEF VIEW HE'D HAD OF IT HAD BEEN ENOUGH.
ERIC HOLISTER HAD WAITED ALL HIS LIFE FOR THAT
MOMENT...



SHYLY, THE SISTERS HAD UNROLLED THE TAPESTRY
AGAIN. ERIC'S HEART HAD RACED IN HIS CHEST. HIS EYES
HAD MOVED SLOWLY OVER THE MIRACLE STITCHES... THE
DREAMY SUMMER COLORS... THE EMOTIONAL SWIRLING COM-
POSITION. HE'D REACHED OUT, AS IN A DREAM, TOUCHED
HIS DREAM, AND HIS DREAM HAD BEEN REAL.

HE WAS NOT
BORN BY
A CORNER!



WE GAVE THE WHOLE
THING! IT WAS JUST
THE BLOOD! THE
FROSTED BODY, POOR
MR. HOLISTER! REMAKE
THIS THAT REFLY,
RIGHT?



YER, THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF IT.
ERIC HAS TAKEN THE TAPESTRY TO
NEW YORK, TO AN ART DEALER FRIEND
OF HIS...JUST TO CHECK ON HIS OWN
JUDGEMENT.

THIS IS GOOD,
ERIC! WHO DID
IT? CAN YOU SEE
MORE? ERGESS -
LETH? SUCH
EXPRESSIONS...
SUCH EMOTION!

HOW MUCH IS IT
WORTH, MILTON?

I'LL GIVE YOU
FIVE HUNDRED
DOLLARS
FOR IT!

AND IF I CAN
GET MORE
FOR YOUR

I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE
TO SELL THEM IN THIS
PARTY. HAVE IN MIND
I'LL BUY ALL YOU
CAN GET. IF THEY'RE
AS GOOD AS THIS ONE
FOR FIVE HUNDRED
DOLLARS EACH!

IT'S A
DEAL,
MILTON!
WRITE OUT
A CHECK
AND I'LL BE
BACK SOON...
WITH OTHERS!



SO ERIC HAS GONE BACK AND TOLD THE SISTERS
FIFTY DOLLARS! OH,
CLEARLY THAT'S AN AWFUL
LOT OF MONEY! AND THIS
IS ALL FOR ERIC!

I HAD TO FIGHT
FOR IT, BUT HE FINALLY
GAVE IN! AND HE
WANTS MORE!

MORE? BUT WE HAVE
NO MORE LEND
THAT WE MADE
OTHERS BUT
WE DESTROYED
THEM!

OH, NO!
THEN YOU'VE
NOT TO MAKE
THEM OVER!

WE COULDN'T
WE WOULDN'T
BE INSPIRED?



UNHAPPY? WE MADE
TAPESTRIES LIKE
THAT ONLY AFTER
WE'VE BEEN A
VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL
DEATH!

THE ONE WE
MADE AFTER
FEATHER BED
WAS OUR FIRST
WE FELL
BENEATH THE
WHEELS OF A
TRAIN!

AND WE MADE
SIX AFTER THAT!
MR. GOLDEN'S
WAS OUR
LATEST! WE
DESTROYED
THE OTHERS!

THEN, IF... IF I COULD
KNUCKLE YOU TO THE
SCENE OF AN
ACCIDENTAL DEATH,
YOU'D BE UNHAPPY?
RIGHT?

IF WE
CAN'T
BURY
YOU
BLOOD,



THE CAR HAD SKED DOWN THE STREET CRAZILY, GATHERING SPEED, THEN IT SPUN OUT OF CONTROL AND PLONCHED EXPLOSIONALLY INTO THE BRICK WALL.



AND NOW HE SAT UPON THE PORCH SWINGER WAITING, WHILE UPSTAIRS, A LIGHT BLOODED IN THE WEAKLY SISTERS' ROOM.

BRIGHT AS WELL GO UP
AND SEE HOW THEY'RE
DOWING?



ERIC ENTERED THE BOARDING HOUSE AND CLIMBED THE STAIRS. MRS CARTER AND HER OTHER ROOMMATE HAD LONG SINCE GONE TO BED AND NOW LAY ENDURING TROUBLED DREAMS OF WHAT THEY'D WITNESSED EARLIER. HE ISAWOED DEEPLY...



THE DOOR OPENED SLOWLY. ERIC ENTERED. HE LOOKED AROUND. THE CLOTH TACKED TIGHTLY TO THE TAP-ESTRY-STRETCHER WAS BARE WHITE AND QUITE BLANK...



ERIC BECAME ANGRY. HE THOUGHT OF MILTON WAITING IN NEW YORK WITH HIS CUSTOMER HUNGRY FOR MORE TAPE-TRIES. HE THOUGHT OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS AND THE 5000 TIMES IT WOULD BUY, AND HE SHOUTED...

WASN'T THAT ACCIDENT GOOD ENOUGH? ISN'T YOU SEE THE SOOT AND THE BLOOD? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? START WEARING!

WE'RE NOT INSPIRED! WE WEREN'T INVITED!



ERIC SAW THE FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR CHECK FLYING AWAY IN WINDS OF TEMPERAMENT. HE SCREAMED.

LOOK! I DON'T KNOW IF I DON'T FREE IT TO MY CAR WOULD SLAM AGAINST THAT WALL AND FOLD UP LIKE THAT FOR NOTHING! I DON'T COMMIT MURDER FOR NOTHING!

MURDERER? OH, GOD! SO THAT'S IT?



THE OLD LADIES LOVED EACH OTHER IN SHOCKED REVERENCE, THEY TURNED TO ERIC ANGRILY.

IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... OR ELSE IT'S NOT ANY GOOD!

YOU TRIED TO TRICK US!

MURDER ISN'T FAIR!

THEY CAME AT HIM SLOWLY, SLIDING ON AGED LEATHER, FORE-
LINS THE INSTRUMENTS OF THEIR ART... THE SCISSORS AND THE LONG SHARP NEEDLES.

IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... LIKE WHEN WE PUSHED FATHER UNDER THE TEA...

OR LIKE WHEN WE PUSHED MR. GOLDEN IN FRONT OF THAT CAR...

OR THE OTHERS WE SO ELEGANTLY MANAGED WHILE YOU WERE LISTENING TO YOUR STUPID LITTLE RADIO.



THEY STOOD OVER HIM LIKE THE THREE WITCHES IN MACBETH... FEEL THEIR LIVING, WRITHING CAULDRON.

IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... LIKE WHAT BE MURDER, VIOLENT TO HAPPEN TO YOU!

IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... LIKE WHAT BE MURDER, VIOLENT TO HAPPEN TO YOU!

MRS. CARTER AND HER ROOMMATES TOOK IN THEIR TROUBLED SLEEPS, BUT NEVER HEARD THE MUFFLED SCREAMS THAT CAME FROM THE SLOWLY BUTCHERED ROOM... NEVER HEARD THE SNAPPING OF THEIR SCISSORS... THE CLICKING OF THEIR NEEDLES... THEIR GIGLES OF SATISFACTION...

PRETTY, ERICA! JELENE! LUV-YA!
LOV-PRETTY!



AND WHEN ERIC'S FRIEND, MILTON STEPPED FORWARD IN HIS GALLERY TO GREET THE THREE FINDLY-LOOKING OLD LADIES, HE ARRIVED WITH THEIR LONG ROUND PACKAGE, HE NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS THEY WERE CAPABLE OF BEARING...



NOT UNTIL THEY UNROLLED THEIR LATEST TAPESTRY OF CROCHETED VEINS AND EMBROIDERED ARTERIES AND BURN MUSCLES AND TERRIFIED FINGER-NAILS AND HAIR AND TACKED-DOWN EYEBALLS AND EARS AND STRUNG-UP BONES AND CARTILAGE...



HEE-HOO! YEP! THE THREE OLD LADIES WERE ARTISTS, ALL RIGHT. JUST LIKE ALL ARTISTS, INCLUDING THE GIFTY-BOYS AT E.C. (WELL, THEY MUST BE GIFTY TO DRAW THIS TRASH, HUH?) AND TALKING ABOUT DRAFT PEOPLE, THIS BIRDS OF A FEW FEATHERS WHICH YOU BOUGHT? HER HELL AND ANYBODY WHO BUYS THIS ASSASSINATING

MONSTER MUST BE AS BAD OFF AS THE CREEPS WHO DREAM IT. WELL, I GOTTA GO NOW. I GOTTA LEAD MY ANONYM EDITORS BACK TO THEIR PADDED CELLS. SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE BOY!



IT WAS A WORK OF ART, ALL RIGHT. IT WAS ERIC KILLEDIN ALL OVER!

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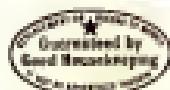
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TALES FROM THE



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FROM THE

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FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



PROOF... OF 8 BRANDS TESTED, PANIC IS BEST IMITATION OF MAD

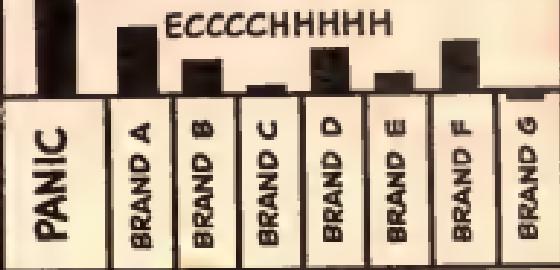


YES, EXTENSIVE TESTS BY
THE E.C. RESEARCH BUREAU
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THAT PANTIC LEADS EIGHT OTHER
BRANDS IN IMITATING MAD!
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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SLIDE INTO THE SLUSHY SLIMY CRYPT OF TERROR, FRIENDS! THIS IS YOUR CRACKED CAPTAIN OF COULD CORPSES, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, ALL READY TO START THE BRAIN ROLLING WITH A WHALE OF A TALE OF TERROR... A BIT OF BULGE I OUGS UP FROM AMONG A BALE OF OLD MARILSCRIPTS THAT WERE CLUTTERING UP A CLAMMY CORNER OF MY CASKER-CAVERN, YOULL RETCH AT THE WRETCHED GAS PLAYED BY CAPTAIN MATT STARKE... A SNEAK OF A SEAMAN WHO IS WAITIN IN STALTER HAMMER'S MOSTEST APARTMENT OVERLOOKING THE SAN DIEGO DOCKS RIGHT NOW! HOW TO BEGIN THIS ODOROUS DRUG I CALL...

FOREVER AMBERGRIS

DEAR! STARKE! OF THE NAME. CAPTAIN MATT STARKE, CAPTAIN OF THE FREIGHTER SALT-TRAIL. I'M ABOARD NOW...HAPPY TO BE TAKIN' MY BALE ON THIS PLUSH BOAT. LIVIN IN THIS NEAT LITTLE MARINE-APARTMENT...BUCKIN' MILLIONS OF COOL BLUE SHORE FROM THIS HAWAII FIFTY-CENTER... AM DREAMIN OF HOW I'LL BOSS BE MASTER OF THE TRINITY LITTLE ISL IN THIS OR ANY PORT. I'M HAPPY 'CAUSE I DON'T EILEEN ENOUGH TO HAVE APPROVED A MAN T'GET HER AND NOW... SHE'S AWAY...



THAT THAT'S RIGHT I
MURDERED... AND THERE
IS NOTHING ANYONE CAN
DO ABOUT IT. NOW, I'VE
GOT THE WORLD I'M RICH
AN' I'M WAITIN' FOR
EILEEN 'T' COME OUT
OF HER ROOM SO'S I'LL
HAVE EVERYTHING
BOUT ME...

HEY, EILEEN!
BLAST IT! HURRY
UP! STOP FOR-
FORGIN' ME FINN
DREBIN AN' GIBON
OUT OR I'LL COME
IN THERE AN'
GET YOU... READY
OR NOT?

WELL, YOU SEE HER?
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! GOT
THE PRETTIEST FACE IN
THE WORLD! AN' HER
FIGURE... WELL... JUST
WAIT AN' SEE! I OUGHT
T'BE HAPPY, BUT SOMETHIN'
KEEPS HANGIN' AT ME.
KEEPS BOTHERN' ME!

I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY
THAT WHALE THREE OF
RIGHT THING, AND THEN... JUST
WHEN I WAS BETCHIN' HIM, I
NEVER SAW A WHALE DROWSE
BEFORE. NOR HAVE I HEARD
OF ANYONE ELSE THAT'S
SEEN IT HAPPEN.

NOW, THERE'S A DARN COMBIN-
ATION OF THINGS FOR A MAN IN LOVE
T'BE THINKIN' OF... A GORGEOUS
WOMAN AND... UMM... WHALE SPOT!
BUT I CAN'T HELP IT. I GOT THE
SAME GOLD FEELIN' IN MY
BLOOD AS I GET WHEN MY SHIP
IS HINNIN' A BEEF IN A THICK
FOG. I CAN'T SEE THE REEF BUT
INSTINCT TELLS ME IT'S THERE...

AN' SOME KIND OF CRAZY INSTINCT
IS HINNIN' AT ME RIGHT NOW.
MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME. LET ME
TELL YOU 'BOUT EILEEN AND ME...
AND MY SHIP... AND THE WHALE...
AN' THE MAN I MURDERED.

BUT WHERE'S TO BEGIN? ON THAT
WARM SPRING MORNING, I RECKON,
WAS THE HEART OF IT. WE'D DROPPED
ANCHOR HERE IN SAN DIEGO AND
ME AND MY FIRST MATE, BEN HARPER,
WERE HURRYIN' DOWN THE SAND-
PLANK...

I WANT YOU TO
HUNK DOWN US
THIS TIME, CAP'N.
I WANT YOU T'
MEET EILEEN!

ANOTHER TIME,
MATEY! I GOT
SOME GOOD
ADVENTURES
IN STORE...



"FOR SEVEN MONTHS... FROM THE TIME BEN HARPER
SHEDDIN' ON MY SHIP, ALL I'VE HEARD FROM HIM WAS
EILEEN... HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS BRIDE OF HIS WAS.
AND HOW I HAD TO MEET HER."

"WELL, HAVE DINNER WITH
ME, THEN, MATT, AT LEAST
THAT..."

"WELL, ALL RIGHT,
BEN. BUT JUST
DINNER THEN I'LL
BE ON MY WAY!"



"WITH BEN HARPER BEIN' THE KING OF A CHAP HE WAS...
NOT AT ALL ON THE RUGGED SIDE, AND NOT MUCH ON LOOKS
EITHER... I NEVER FIGURED HIM TO HAVE LANDED ANYTHING
LIKE THE BEAUTY THAT ATTRACTED HIM WHEN WE REACHED
THEIR APARTMENT."

"OH, HONEY... I THOUGHT
THIS TRIP WOULD NEVER
END!"

"IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU
HOME, MRS. DARLING."



"BUT I COULD SEE FROM THE WAY THAT SHE TURNED HER HEAD SO'S HE COULDN'T KISS HER ON THE LIPS THAT EILEEN WASN'T AS GLAD TO SEE ME AS SHE MADE OUT. FACT IS, AS HE WAS LOVIN' HER, SHE KEPT LOOKIN' PAST HIM TO ME..."



"SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME... TALKIN' WITH HER EYES... FIRST CURIOUSLY, THEN AN INVITATION... TOLDING IT WAS AN ELECTRIC THING THAT PASSED BETWEEN US... SOMETHING WE BOTH UNDERSTOOD IN THOSE FIRST QUICK MOMENTS WITHOUT HAVING SPoken A WORD."



"BUT I INTRODUCED HER, BUT I FELT I ALREADY KNEW HER BETTER'SHE DID. I FOLLOWED THEM INTO THE LIVIN' ROOM, WATCHIN' EILEEN TAKIN' IN PARTS MOVIN' SENSUOUSLY. THERE WERE PICTURES BURNIN' IN MY BRAIN, TATTOOED WITH A WHITE HOT NEEDLE."

"MATT'S AGREED TO HAVE DINNER WITH US, HON... BUT HE WON'T STAY ON WITH US. HE'S GOT OTHER PLANS..."



"BOTH MMOVED OFF TOWARDS THE KITCHEN..."

SEE IF YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT GETTIN' MATT TO GOOFY WITH US WHILE I GO MIX-UP SOME DRINKS.

SURE, BEN..."



"EILEEN DID SOMETHIN', ALL RIGHT. SHE MOVED TOWARDS ME, SLOWLY, HER HIPS SWAYIN' EVER SO EASY. SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME WITH THOSE SOFT, WHININ' EYES, AND THEN SHE SPOKE WITH THAT SOFT, MELLOW, HONEY-FILLED, EXCITING VOICE..."

"YOU... WELL... JUST... OH... WITH... I... I... WE... WON'T YOU, MATT?"



"SEVEN MONTHS AT SEA WITHOUT SO MUCH AS GLIMPIN' A WOMAN MAKES A MAN ACT WITHOUT THINKIN', I GUESS. I HAD A FRENZIED IMPULSE TO THROW MY ARMS AROUND EILEEN... FULL HER TIGHT AGAIN ME... CRUSH MY HUNGRY LIPS AGAIN HERE, AND SUDDEDY, I WAS DOIN' IT..."



"SHE PULLED BACK AT FIRST, THEN CHANGED HER MIND, AND MOVED IN TIGHT. SHE MELTED... BLINDED... LIKE WE WERE ONE. THAT'S HOW QUICK WE HIT IT OFF TOGETHER, EILEEN AND ME. I WAS PUSPIN' HEAVY AND WINNIN' HER LIFETIME WHEN SHE TENDED..."

"WHY'D YOU DO THAT, MATT?"



"SHE KNEW WHY I DID IT, THE TANTALIZIN' DEVIL, SO I GAVE HER A FLIP ANSWER JUST AS HER, POOR STUPID, LOVESHICK BOY, CAME IN WITH THE OTHERS."

"I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO KISS THE BRIDE BEFORE THIS!"

"HAW'S TOLD YOU. YOU'D LIKE EILEEN, CAP'N. SO ON, BE MY GUEST."

"ER, I... I THINK I'VE TALKED MATT INTO SQUEAKIN', BEN..."

"I GAVE EILEEN A SABREUL PECK ON THE CHEEK AND BEN GRINNED, PLEASED AS PUNCH THAT I WAS PLEASED WITH HIS WIFE. PLEASED IT WAS CRAZY ABOUT HER... TORTURED 'CAUSE BEN WAS ALWAYS CLOSE BY IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, BUT THEN, ONE DAY, I GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO EILEEN..."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THAT'S PUTTING IT BLUNTLIKE. HINT: YOU DON'T LOVE HIM."

"THAT'S PUTTING IT BLUNTLIKE. HINT: IT'S WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A BLUNT ANSWER: SECURITY!"



"BEN MAKES 2000 MONEY! HE NEVER SPENT MUCH BEFORE WE GOT MARRIED! HE BRAIN SECURITY TO ME, MATT!... A NICE HOME... GLOWNEE... FOOD... EVER THIS LITTLE CAP..."

"AND NOW, NOW THAT YOU'VE MET ME? I CAN SEE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME. YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME!"

"I DO LOVE YOU, MATT! I'VE NEVER MET A MAN I LOVED SO MUCH! BUT I WANT THE THINGS BEN MONEY GETS FOR ME."

"AND I WANT YOU, EILEEN. I'M GOIN' TO HAVE YOU SOMEDAY, TODD. I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I WILL! I SWEAR IT..."



"THE TWO WEEKS SHOT BY AND IT WAS TIME TO SHOVE OFF AGAIN. I SAW EILEEN ONCE MORE THE WAY I DID THAT FIRST DAY... WITH BEN'S ARMS AROUND HER... SHE LOOKIN' OVER HIS SHOULDER, BUT THIS TIME, WHAT SHE SAID WAS MEANT FOR ME..."

"BE GOOD, GOOD-BYE, DARLING! I'LL WAIT... I'M COUNTING EVERY SECOND TILL YOU COME BACK TO ME..."

"AND LATER, BEN AND I STOOD ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SULTANA, WATCHIN' SAN DIEGO VANISH INTO THE MIST. THERE WAS NO TALKIN' BETWEEN US, ONLY OUR QUIET THOUGHTS: HIM REMEMBERIN' THOSE GLOWNEE NIGHTS WITH EILEEN... AND ME, HATIN' HIM FOR THEM, KNOWIN' IT WAS ME SHE WANTED."

"AND I MADE UP MY MIND RIGHT THEN THAT MY FIRST MATE, BEN HARPER, WOULD NOT BE COMIN' BACK FROM THIS VOYAGE WITH ME."

"I KNOW, CAP'N! YOU OUGHT TO HAVE SOMEBODY LIKE EILEEN TO COME HOME TO!"

"MAYBE SO, BINFARBLE SO..."



WHAT IN THERE ABOUT A MAN THAT LETS HIM LOVE ONE WOMAN... LONG FOR HER THE WHOLE TIME HE'S ASEA AND THEM, NO SOONER'S HE HITS PORT, BET ABOUT HUNTING' FOR ANOTHER TO BE WITH. BEN AND ME WERE NO DIFFERENT. FROM BOMBY TO OSAKA, JAPAN...



I LEFT THE SHODDY LITTLE SHOP AND MADE MY WAY BACK THROUGH CROOKED JAMMED STREETS TOWARD THE SHIP, MY HEAD SPINNING WITH THOUGHTS OF EILEEN AND BEN AND HOW HE WASN'T GONNA SEE HER AGAIN... NOT IF I GOT MY BUCKETS WORTH OF INFORMATION OUT OF THAT HISHER, GRINNIN' OLD BENT...



WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, MATT? OSAKA WAS OUR LAST PORT OF CALL...

THIS IS A PRIVATE DEAL, BEN. A FRIEND OF MINE IN BOMBY ASKED ME TO DROP A BARREL OF FUEL OIL AT THIS LITTLE ISLAND. I PROMISED I WOULD...



AFTER A PLEASANT VISIT, I REMEMBERED OTHER BUSINESS THAT NEEDS TENDIN' TO. SO, SHOES IN HAND, I PADDED OVER TO A PAPER WALL AND CALLED OUT...

I'LL MEET YOU BACK AT THE SHIP, BEN.



THEN I VISITED A CERTAIN TOOTH-BERT WHO COULD FURNISH A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS, MOST OF THEM UNPLEASANT. HE MARKED A CRUDE BLACK CIRCLE AROUND A TINY DOT ON A GREASY OLD MAP FOR WHICH I GAVE HIM ONE CRISP U.S. BUCK.

PLENTY PEOPLE ON ISLAND, YEAH, BUT IT IS NOT GOOD TO GO THERE, YEEP.

GRAND-PAP THANKS IT.



WE WERE UNDER WAY AGAIN BEFORE MIDNIGHT, BEN WAS LYIN' ON HIS BUNK, WEARY, BUT NOT TOO TIRED TO TALK ABOUT HIS FAVORITE TOPIC... EILEEN. I SAT AT MY DESK STUDIUM THE GREASY OLD MAP...

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A GOOD FEELING IT IS TO BE FINALLY GONNA HOME TO HEP, MATT... STRAIGHT HOME TO MY HUSTIN' BARBERS...

NOT STRAIGHT HOME, BEN. I'VE GOT ONE SHORT STOP TO MAKE!



WE REACHED THE TINY SPOT OF FORSAKEN CORAL AND LAVA THE THIRD NIGHT OUT. EXCEPT FOR A GLIMMER OF LIGHT HERE AND THERE IN THE BLACKNESS, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF LIFE ON THE ISLAND. WHILE THE BARREL OF FUEL OIL WAS BEING LOADED INTO THE BUNKY, I FLICKED BEN TO TAKE IT ABOARD...

IS THERE TIME FOR ME TO DO SOME HUNTING, BUPPET?

REKURH, OSAKA MATIE. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU...



"BEN REACTED EXACTLY AS I'D EXPECTED HIM TO REACT. I WATCHED HIM ROW ACROSS THE LAGOON TO A SMALL DOCK AND TIE-UP. A MINUTE LATER HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK, RAT-INFESTED TOWN OF THE ORIENT'S ISLAND DUMPING GROUND FOR ITS CONDEMNED... CONDEMNED TO DEATH, THAT IS, BY BUBONIC PLAGUE! THE BLACK DEATH! ROTTING DEATH..."



"I CAME DOWN FAST. HE STARTED SWELLIN' AROUND HIS ARMPITS AND OTHER PLACES. SOON, A FESTERING, GREENISH-YELLOW SCOUR COVERED HIM AND A STINKIN', NAUSEATING BURNTASTE OZZED FROM HIS FLESH. I KEPT CLEAR OF HIS QUARTERS FROM THEN ON AND ORDERED THE CREW TO DO THE SAME..."

"I KNOW THE SYMPTOMS... THE BOILIN', POISONIN' OF THE BLOOD, AND THAT COUGH. THAT'S WHEN IT'S DANGEROUS! THE PLAGUE IS IN HIS LUNGS NOW. A MAN CAN CATCH IT EVER FALLIN' IT HIM..."



"I'VE BEEN WHALED BEFORE BUT NEVER SO CLOSE AS THAT BREATHLESS BREEZE. HE KEPT UP WITH THE SHIP, ... OPENIN' HIS TANIN' CAVES OF A MOUTH TO LET THE BARRAGE IN..."



"WHAT KEPT BEN HARRER ALIVE, I'LL NEVER KNOW. MIGHT HE WAS RACIN' AGAINST DEATH JUST TO SEE GREEN ONCE MORE. ANYHOW, THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE TENSE ONES... AND I TRIED TO RELAX BY TOSIN' CHUNKS OF MOLDY BEEF AND OTHER ROTTEN TO THE WHALE TAILIN' US..."



"IT WAS ALMOST DARK WHEN MY FIRST MATE RETURNED TO THE SHIP, EXHAUSTED BUT PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. HE'S HUNTED DOWN AND GOTTER' WHAT HE WANTED. HE'S GOTTER *MORE* THAN HE WANTED! IT TOOK TWO DAYS, THEN BREW OUT..."

"...CAN'T PICK MYSELF UP OUT OF MY BUNK, MATT. NOT... FEVER... CHILLS. I'M SICK..."



"YOU'LL HAVE TO DOCTOR YOURSELF, BEN. WE'RE A THOUSAND MILES FROM THE NEAREST PORT..."

"AT THE MENTION OF THE DREAD, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, THE CREW PALED AND SHUDDERED AS ONE MAN. IT WAS PART OF MY PLAN! LETTIN' THEM INHOLE... REMINDIN' THEM. BUT ONE DAY, THEY FOUND SOMETHIN' ELSE TO OCCUPY THEIR MINDS. I FOUND 'EM TOSIN' GARBAGE OVERBOARD..."

"WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?"



"FRESH' THE WHALE, CAP'N STARKE. HE'S BEEN FOLLOWIN' US ALL DAY. HE'S HUNGRY, MORNIN' BEET!"

"THE WHALE STARTED WITH US. SOMETIMES HE'D ROLL AND DIVE AND WE WOULDN'T SEE HIM FOR HOURS, THEN SOMEBODY'D TELL, "THAR' E BLOWIN'" AND HE'D BE BACK CHASIN' ANOTHER GARBAGE FEAST..."



"AT NIGHT I'D GO OUT ON DECK, BREATHIN' IN THE SALTY BARM PACIFIC AIR, AND I'D THINK ABOUT ME AND EILEEN. I WAS THINKIN' OF HER THE NIGHT ONE OF THE MEN CAME ALIBAMIN' AND SCREAMIN':

"...HIS FACE IS ALL ROTTEN BLACK, CAPN... AND HIS FLESH IS MOVIN' LIKE IT'S... CHOKIN'... CRAWLIN' WITH MAGGOTS!"

"BEN... OUT OF HIS ROOM! GOOD LORD! HOW COULD THE MAN BALLY?"



"THEY TRIED HOOKIN' THEIR GAFFS INTO BEN, BUT THE TIPS CAME HANGIN' WITH HORRIBLE GOBS OF FOUL-SMELLING ROTTED FLESH. THEY TRIED SHOVIN' WITH THE POLES. BEN GOT CUT IN TWO BY THE RAILS, WITH NO MORE SOUND THAN IF HE'D BEEN A JELLYFISH, AS HE WENT OVERBOARD."



"AN' THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED! THE HUGE WHALE SPERM SHUDDERED CONVULSIVELY. A TREMENDOUS YELLOW AND GREY BUBBLING MASS OF WAX-LIKE STUFF SPLEWED OUT OF HIS CAVIARHOLE MOUTH, BUBBLIN' UNCONTROLLIN' ON THE RAIL, ETC. SUFFIN'!"

"LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, CAPN! THAT STENCH IS GONNA KILL ME!"

"NO! NO, BY HEAVENS! THAT'S WHALE SPERM. AMBERGRIS!"



"AND THEN, I SAW HIM! BEN WAS A WALKIN' COATH. HIS BODY A MASS OF BLACK ROT. SMALL SPONGY CHAMPS DROPPIN' AWAY WITH EACH STUFF STANDIN' IN STEP HE TOOK. HIS CLOTHES WERE A TATTERED STINKIN' MESS OF GREENISH DRIED DOZE AND CONCEALED BLACK BLOOD. MY GINGER CAME UP SOUL IN MY THROAT."

"CHOKIN'..."



"I HOLLERED FOR SPOTLIGHTS AS HE STUMBLERED AROUND THE DECK, CACKIN' CAME ROLLIN' WITH GAFPS. THEIR FACES TWISTED IN DISGUST. BEN KEPT SHUFFLIN' COMIN' TOWARD ME."

"GET HIM OVER THE EDGE, YA BILGE LIGE! DUMP HIM BEFORE HE HAS US ALL WASTIN' AWAY WITH THE BLACK ROT!"



"BY MORNING, I FELT BETTER ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. WE'D LEFT WHAT WAS LEFT OF BEN HUNDREDS OF MILES BEHIND US AND I'D COMMITTED A MURDER NOBODY'D BE ABLE TO PIN ON ME. I HAD MY EYES ON LOVELY EILEEN WHEN TOM BALLARD, MY SECOND MATE CALLED ME TO THE RAIL..."

"OUR WHALE'S STILL WITH US, CAPN!"

"THAT'S RIGHT! BUT HE'S ACTIN' QUEER... ISN'T HE?"



"AMBERGRIS! FLOATIN' GOLD!" THE SPERM OF A Sperm Whale. NEEDED FOR THE BEST PERFUMES. THAT FOUL-SMELLING, FATTY MESS WAS WORTH A FORTUNE!"

"REVERSE ENGINES! PREPARE TO LOWER AWAY ALL BOATS! A HUNDRED DOLLAR BONUS TO EACH MAN WHO HELPS..."



"I SHIPPED A HUNDRED BARRELS OF MY FUEL OIL CARGO TO HOLD MY AMBERRIES. A WEEK LATER WE ARRIVED IN SAN DIEGO, WHERE I CALLED BLAZES FROM A PORT HEALTH OFFICIAL...BUT NOT UNTIL AFTER I'D DISPOSED OF THE AMBERRIES..."

COMING INTO PORT AFTER A PLAGUE DEATH OR YOUR SHIP MAY COST YOU YOUR PAPERS, CAPTAIN STARKEY

WITH MY PAPERS. I'M A RICH MAN AND I'M GOING TO MARRY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD!"

"THE PERFUME MAKER NOT ONLY PAID ME SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND DUCATS FOR MY AMBERRIES, BUT ALSO SENT ME A FLASK OF THE SCENT MADE FROM IT. WHEN I FINALLY GOT OUT OF QUARANTINE, I BROUGHT IT TO EILEEN..."

"I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW SHE DIED, MATT! ALL I KNOW IS, YOU ARE HERE... THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!"

"HERE, BABY! HERE'S ENOUGH PERFUME TO BATHE IN! AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!"

"SO THAT'S IT? NOW, EILEEN IS IN HER ROOM THERE, GETTING INTO 'SOMETHING COMFORTABLE', AS SHE PUT IT, WHICH IS PROBABLY A SHEER BLACK negligee, AND I'M THINKING ABOUT HOW SOME STUPID WHALE TURNED UP WHEN IT DID..."



"I GUESSED TO BE GLAD IT HAPPENED! IF IT HADN'T, TO BE SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS POORER, AND... OH, LORD!"

"BEN! THAT BLASTED WHALE MUST HAVE SWALLOWED THAT BLACK-ROTTED DISGUSTING REMAINDER OF BEN HARPER! THAT'S WHY HE THREW UP!"

"EILEEN! EILEEN, OPEN UP QUICK! DON'T USE THAT PERFUME, EILEEN! DON'T USE IT!"



EILEEN HARPER COMES OUT OF HER ROOM NOW, SWINNING IRATICALLY... THE BLACK SPORRY, BOTTLING FLESH DROPPING FROM HER FACE, THE WHITE BONE GLEAMING THROUGH HERE AND THERE. CAPTAIN STARKEY SCREAMS IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT AND STENCH OF HER...

"WHY NOT, MATT? IT'S SUCH A LOVELY-SELLING PERFUME, DARLING."

"YAAAHNGGGH!"



- END -

"HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S THE LEAD-OFF FARM, TELL-HOUSE! DID YOU NOTICE THAT EILEEN REALLY DIDN'T LIKE THE PERFUME, MATT SAID? HEY, DIDN'T YOU SEE THE WAY HER FACE DROPPED? WELL, I GOT A DATE WITH

MY EDITOR TO PLAY A GAME OF HEARTS. WE USE REAL DICES I'LL BE BACK LATER WITH ANOTHER TERROR TOME. NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE KAULF-KEEPER, BY THE WAY. THE WHALE IN THIS TOME WAS SOBRY HE BROUGHT THE WHOLE THING UP! 'BYE NOW!'

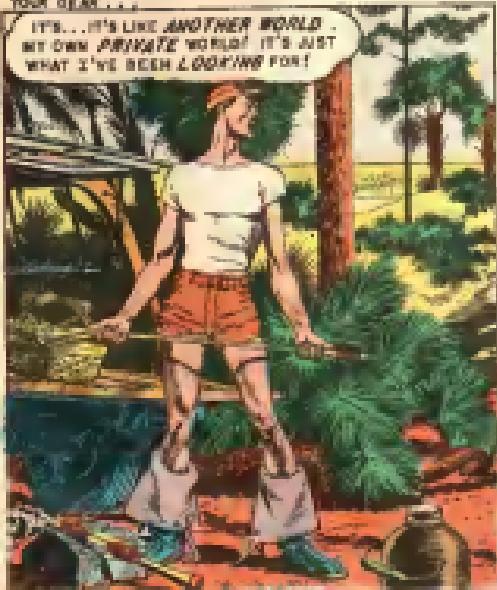
THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, HOW SEASICK, HOW GOOD! OLD MAN DEMOCRAT G.E. HAS SOFTENED YOU UP FOR THE CHILLS! NOW YOUR KALET-KEEPER IS READY TO PUT YOU ON ICE WITH A GRIFFINLY GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF A GROSS BOON WHO DRAGGED HIS WAY INTO A DIVE! HE WAS A REAL GORE GUY WHEN HE WAS THROUGH SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND LISTEN TO THIS EERIE EPISODE I CALL...

BURIAL at SEA

YOU'RE NAME IS BABY BOON. YOU'VE ALWAYS CRaved SOLITUDE AND HOW YOU'VE FOUND IT ON THIS BLEAK, LONELY, WINDSCREWED, SUN-TORTURED FLORIDA KEY. . . THIS GRIM ACRE OF UNREFINED PARADISE. YOU GUIDE YOUR OLD CAR INTO A SANDY, BRISTLING PALMETTO PATCH, AND YOU UNLOAD YOUR GEAR . . .

IT'S . . . IT'S LIKE ANOTHER WORLD . . .
MY OWN PRIVATE WORLD! IT'S JUST
WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!



SWELTERING IN A SEA OF SWEAT, BARRING UNDER THE LOAD OF FISHING TACKLE, BAIT BOX, FOOD HAMPER AND GALLON JUG OF WATER, YOU FIND TEMPORARY RELIEF IN THE SHADE OF GAUNT LONG-NECKED PINES AS YOU TRUDGE TOWARD THE GLARING, WHITE BEACH.



YOU PASS A LINE OF SILENT PALMS LEFT LEANING LANTERNS BY SOME LONG AND VIOLENT WIND THAT HAD ONCE ROARED BY. AND, UNLOADING YOUR EQUIPMENT ONTO THE SUFFLING SAND, YOU STUDY THE CURVACEOUS-Y-SHAPED BRITISHOSA MANGROVE TREES, THEIR EXPOSED SHARKEE ROOTS INTERTWINING, BROWNING FROM THE SUN AT THE SHORE...



YOU TURN AT THE SOUND AND SEE NO FISH, BUT AN ALMOST-NAKED, BEARDED, BERRY-BROWN OLD MAN WITH GREY HAIR DOWN TO HIS SHOULDERS EMERGE FROM THE DEPTHS AND MAKE HIS WAY TOWARD THE BEACH...



THOU, BANMET HOM, YOU SWEAR UNDER YOUR BREATH... BECAUSE YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE. YOUR ISOLITUDE IS GONE. YOU BEGIN TO FEEL... TO LEAVE IN DIS-SUIT... WHEN YOU FEEL THE Sudden, STRONG THUGGAGE ON YOUR LINE...



THE FISH BREAKS WATER, STRUGGLING TO SPIT OUT THE HOOK AND YOU SEE THAT IT IS A BARRACUDA FINALLY, YOU BRING THE VICIOUS SQUONKEL OF THE SEA TO LAND. YOU STARE DOWN AT YOUR BARBING CATCH, SHIVER AT THE SHIRT OF ITS BARBED BERRIN TEETH...

DEVIL! WELL, YOU'RE THROUGH SCARING AWAY BOOF-EATING FISH!



BEYOND, THE TURQUOISE ATLANTIC RESTS TRANQUILLY BETWEEN TIDES. BOOLHOOK RAFTED, FEET BARED, YOU TREAD FAR OUT OVER THE SAND AND CORAL BOTTOM BEFORE REACHING KNEE-HIGH WATER. YOU BEGIN TO SUFF-CAST AND ALL IS PEACE AND QUIET EXCEPT FOR THE SOUND OF A FISH NEARBY, LEAVING FROM THE SEA...



YOU STAND, STARING, AS HE MOVES BOUNDLESSLY ACROSS THE SAND TO THE BROKEN HULL OF AN ANCIENT VESSEL THAT HAD BEEN TOSSED, HALF-HIDDEN, AMONG THE PALMS. AS YOU WONDER WHY YOU HADN'T NOTICED THE GRIZZLED WRECK BEFORE, THE OLD MAN VANISHES INTO IT THROUGH A GRIDE GODDAMN CUT INTO ITS ROTTING SKIN...



YOU PAK AND LEAVE YOUR SINKERED PARADISE, GRATIFIED, AT LEAST, THAT THE OLD MAN HADN'T SEEN YOU AND SUBJECTED YOU TO ENDLESS, BORING TALK. SUDDENLY, A LONG BLACK SHADOW FALLS ACROSS YOUR PATH. A THIS, PIPING VOICE BRINGS YOU UP SHORT...



YOU TURN HOME, BARRET, FACING THE BRIZZLED OLD MAN. NUDE, EXCEPT FOR A TATTERED FILTHY PAIR OF CUSH PANTS THAT REEK OF DEAD FISH. HE POINTS A RUSTY, USED BIKERAT AT YOUR CHEST...

"YOU HEERED ME, MISTER! I COME FUST TO THIS PROPTY, SO IT'S MINE! HOW JOY, 'TONE I BLAST YU CLEAR T' KINGDOM COME!"



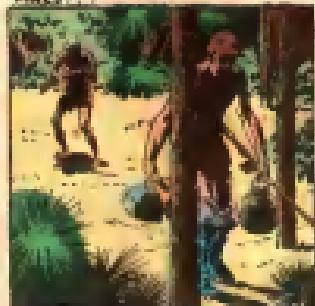
YOUR FRIGHT OF THIS BRIZZLED OLD MAN WITH THE ANCIENT WEAPON GIVES WAY TO ANGER AT HAVING BEEN CHEATED OF YOUR LONED-UP FOR POLITUSS...

"I WOULDN'T GO, YOU DIRTY OLD COOT, BUT NOW I GOT A MIND TO BIFFY!"

"TRY STATIN', MISTER, AN' I'LL BE GOT'TIN' YUN UP FER SNAKE BAIT!"



THERE'S A COLD BLUNT IN HIS ICE-BLUE STEEL, AND HIS SUN-BRONZED CROSS-HATCHED BIKIN GRINS TAUT ACROSS HIS JAWS. YOU RELENT IN THE FACE OF THE WEAPON IN THE OLD MAN'S TIGHTENED GRIP AND YOU MOVE OFF AWAYLY THROUGH THE PINES...



BOLTERS WITH RESENTMENT, YOU STOW YOUR BEAR INTO YOUR CAR, THEN YOU HAZE BACK TOWARDS THE BEACH, UNWILLING TO BOW TO THE OLD ONE'S ILL WILL...



"I'LL SHOW THAT OLD CRAB, I'LL BURN 'IM OUT. I'LL SET FIRE TO THAT FILTHY WRECK HE LIVES IN AND I'LL BURN 'IM OUT FOR GOOD!"



SLOWLY, SILENTLY, STEALTHILY YOU MAKE YOUR WAY BACK TO THE BARNACLE AND SALT-ENCROCHED WOODEN CARCASS OF HALF A ONCE-PROUD VESSEL. YOU'RE FILLED WITH VINDICATIVENESS AND CURIOSITY. YOU STOP OUTSIDE THE ROTTED DOOR. A METALLIC SLEAM CATCHES YOUR EYES...

"WHAT.. WHAT'S THAT ON THE SAND? LOOKS LIKE A . . ."



YOU PICK UP THE GLITTERING OBJECT. YOU STUDY IT, TURNING IT OVER IN YOUR HAND.

"IT IS! IT'S A GOLD COIN! REAL GOLD!"



YOUR FIRST REACTION IS TO GET AWAY WITH YOUR PRIZE. YOU HURRY, STUMBLING, TO YOUR CAR...THE ANCIENT GOLD COUPON CLUTCHED TIGHTLY IN YOUR SWEATY FISTS. YOU DRIVE HASTILY OFF THE LONG KEY, SPEEDING NORTHWARD ACROSS THE OVERSEAS HIGHWAY BRIDGES...

BUT WHY THIS COIN'S BEEN THERE ALL THE TIME AND THE OLD COOT NEVER...NOTICED...IT...



YOU EASE UP ON THE GAS. YOU STOP RUNNING. YOU THINK SOME MORE AS YOU DRIVE SLOWLY NORTHWARD. SOON, YOU REACH ANOTHER KEY, ROLL UP TO A MOTEL THERE, AND WALK TOWARDS IT...

WHAT IF THE LUNATIC IS SITTING ON A FORTUNE IN GOLD WHAT GOLD WOULD IT DO HIM? HE'S TOO OLD TO ENJOY IT!

OVERSEAS EATS
KEY LIME PIE-SEAS
BAIT & TACKLE

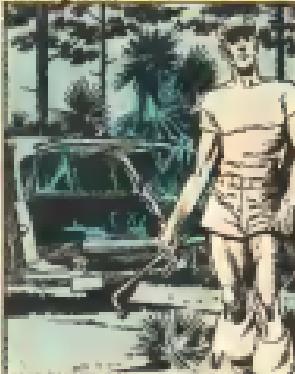


SO, BARNEY HOGS, GRIEVE AND DETERMINATION ITCH THEMSELVES INTO YOUR FACE AS YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION...

I'M GOING BACK THERE... WHAT'LL TOMORROW! AND IF HE'S IT BE, BUT MORE GOLD, I'M MISTERT GOING TO GET IT!



YOU ARRIVE BACK AT "THE OLD MAN'S KEY" ALONG WITH THE NIGHT. PARK AS YOU DID THAT MORNING AMONG THE PALMETTOS. AND, TAKING A JACKKNIFE, YOU SLIT YOUR CAR...



ISN'T THAT RIDICULOUS, BARNEY? THINK AGAIN. THAT'S IT! NOW YOU'VE GOT IT...

...OR MAYBE... MAYBE HE'S GOT MORE HIDDEN IN THAT WRECK? A FORTUNE IN GOLD... MAYBE...



YOU SIT AT A FLY-FLECKED COUNTER, STARING AT THE MENU... HARDLY SEEING IT.

AND WHO'D BELIEVE HOW IF HE BARRELS TO THE LAW ABOUT HIS GOLD BEING MISSING FOR THAT MATTER, WHO'D MISS THE OLD MAN?

YES, SIR?



QUIET WHISPERS IN THE PINE NEEDLES ACCOMPANY YOUR SLOW APPROACH TO THE BEACH. THE ELEGANT CHIRPS OF CIGALES SURROUND YOU. WITHIN, YOU FEEL THE RAPID TRUMPETING OF YOUR HEART. A RISING GIBBOS MOON LIGHTS YOUR WAY TO THE SAND BULK AMONG THE PALMS ON THE BEACH...



NOW YOU ARE THERE, BARNEY. YOUR HEAVY BREATHING BLENDING WITH THE BREEZE BLOWN PALMFRONDS THAT SOUND SO MUCH LIKE A SUMMER SHOWER, AND WITH THE GENTLE LAPPS OF THE SURF UPON THE NEARBY SHORE. A SOFT GRANGE LIGHT GLIMMERS THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR. YOU PEER IN.



YOU STEP TOWARD HIM. THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS RAG-WRAPPED TREASURE OF COULDONS TO THE FLOOR. THEN, BENDING AS THOUGH TO RETRIEVE THEM, HE COMES UP AGAIN, THE BUSTED OLD MUSKET IN HIS BONY PAWS...

POINTED AT YOUR HEAD.

SEE, MISTER? I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR YUN FOR FEARS! I KNOW'D YUN COME AM TRY AN' STEAL MY TREASURE, SO I PREPARED. I PREPARED EVERYTHIN'.

NOT MISTER DON'T



YOU LEAP AT HIM, BRUSHING THE IRON JACKHAMMERS DOWN ON HIS SKULL, FEELING THE CRUSHING OF BONE.

I'M PREPARED! I'LL UNARMED!



AGAIN AND AGAIN YOU STRIKE, UNTIL HE SAYS LIFELESS TO THE FLOOR. THEN, ONE MORE TERRIBLE BLOW AS HE LIES THERE, JUST TO MAKE SURE, AND HIS BRAINS SCATTER ABOUT THE WORN-EATEN FLOOR.

YOU SEE HIM IN THE FLICKERING CANDLE GLOW. HIS MAD EYES GLEAMING AS HE LETS A TRICKLE OF GOLD COINS FALL THROUGH HIS GRANDED FINGERS INTO A WOODEN BOX ON THE RUGGED TABLE AT WHICH HE SITS. THE FART CHIME OF CULLINN METAL INVITES YOU IN...



THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, BARNEY! SLAM OPEN THE DOOR! THAT'S IT! SCARED ALMOST OUT OF HIS WITS, THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS TREASURE INTO A DIRTY WRINKLED CLOTH AND BULLS IT UP IN HIS TREMBLING HANDS.

YEAH, YOU WEATHER-BEATER OLD MISTER? YOU DO HAVE MORE GOLD SPeCIES?



WHAT IN WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' 'BOUT, MISTER? WHAT YOU MIGHT HERE?

THE OLD MAN CHORTLES, PULLS BACK HIS FOREFINGER, SQUEEZING THE MUSKET'S TRIGGER, BUT NOTHING HAP-PENS. NO BLAST, NO SHOT, NOTHING. THE BOLT, FROZEN BY YEARS OF RUST, DOESN'T MOVE. A COLD THWICKED GRIN WREATHES YOUR SWEAT-STAINED FACE AS HE RAVES ON.

YOU'RE DABIN' NOW, MISTER! I DOWN SHOT YUN DABIN' AND NOW I GOTTA SHOT YUN. I BEEN READYF?

WELL, YOU, YOU'RE CRAZY AS A BEDBUG, YOU SMELLY OLD BOAT!



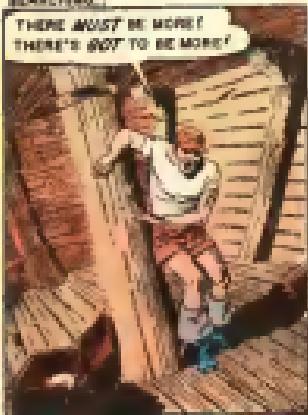
YOU PICK UP THE BUNDLE, AND EMPTY THE COINS INTO THE INSIDE'S BOX. THROWIN' THE RAG AWAY.

THAT'S IT, BOY! ONLY THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD!



YOU SCRABBLE ABOUT THE BRIM-FOAMED WRECK. ANGRY... ANGRYLY SEARCHING...

THERE JUST BE MORE!
THERE'S NOT TO BE MORE!



BUT YOU'VE GOT IT ALL BARRED, AND KNOWING THAT, YOU ROLL TO THE FLOOR, SICK AND TIRED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. BUT THE OLD MAN'S RIDE OF DIRTY CLOTH CATCHES YOUR EYE... .

DOTTED LINE... BARRED "10 YARDS", TO A BIST'X... FROM A LINE MARKED "LOW TIDE"... AND AN ARROW MARKED "W"! BY GOD! IT'S A MAP!



WELL, ILL BELL! IT'S A PUZZLE MAP THE OLD MAN MADE. IT MUST BE WHERE THE OTHER HALF OF THIS SHIP IS. THAT'S WHAT IT MUST BE MEAN! SURE'A PIRATE SHIP, BROKEN IN TWO BY A HURRICANE! HALF SUNK? HALF WASHED ASHORE... THIS HALF!



THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE WAS COMIN' OUT OF THE WATER. HE WAS BRINGIN' BACK THESE COINS FROM THE SUNK HALF OF THE WRECK! IT'S OUT THERE!



SLOWLY BARRELS, BLOW now. THINK IT OUT. YOU'RE ON TO SOMETHING! JUST THINK IT OUT CAREFULLY. BLOW OUT THE OLD MAN'S LANTERN. THAT'S IT! NOW GO OUTSIDE. LOOK OUT THERE... AT THE SEA...

I'M NOT MUCH OF AN UNDERWATER SWIMMER BUT I MAYBE ABLE TO RENT A DIVING SUIT SOMEWHERE. I TELL! ILL DRIVE TO KEY WEST...



SO YOU DRIVE ALL NIGHT, BARNEY, AND YOU'RE IN KEY WEST WHEN SUN LIGHTS THE SKY. BY LATE AFTERNOON, YOU'RE BACK AT THE "OLD MAN'S" WITH A DIVING SUIT, ENOUGH HOSE TO GO OUT 10 YARDS, A GASOLINE-DRIVEN COMPRESSOR, THE WORKS. BREATHING WITH EXCITEMENT, YOU TAKE A SPADE AND START RACING OUT INTO THE SURF...



DEEPER AND DEEPER YOU GO... OUT UNDER THE ROLLING BREAKERS, OUT INTO THE SEA, AND THE SEA IS ALIVE AROUND YOU, BARNEY... ALIVE AND FRIGHTENING...



YOU GO OUT PAST THE MAP'S 100 YARDS AND THE SEA AROUND YOU IS FULL OF WRECKS, BARREY, BUT NO BROKEN PIRATE HULL, NO SUBMERGED HALFBREAKER DO THE JOB...

I MUST'VE BEEN CRAZY TO TAKE THAT ON. IT'S BEEN SERIOUSLY?

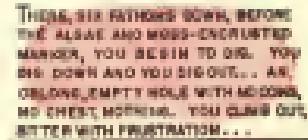


WITH YOUR SPADE, YOU SCRAPED OFF THE GREEN ALGAE AND MOSS AND SLIME. AND YOU TURN COLD, STAGGERING BACK IN A FRENZY AT WHAT YOU SEE...

no' mo' good long'

AND THEN YOU SEE IT, RISING LIKE
A SHADOW AHEAD OF YOU. THE
WANDERER.

THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT! THERE
AIN'T NO REASON, HE'S HAD THE
TREASURE, HE WASN'T BURNIN' IT
OUT! HE WAS BURNIN' IT IN
HERE BURNIN' IT!²



MAYBE THE MARKER SHOWS WHICH SIDE TO DIBBLE. I'LL JUST DRAPE OFF THE SLIME . . .



YOUR AIRLINE FOOLS AROUND THE MARKER, STOPPING YOU FROM ROLLING, TERRIFIED, YOU TAKE AT THE SUB-SURFACE. THE MARKER TILTS FORWARD, SLOWLY... FALLING... IT IS SLOW MOTION.

A black and white illustration of a man in a suit and tie, looking shocked or distressed, with a speech bubble above him containing the text "SO! NO! GOOD LORD!".



"PUSHING YOU DOWN INTO THE HOLE YOU'VE DUG...PUSHING YOU DOWN INTO YOUR GRAVE. FOR YOU KNOW THAT BEFORE LONG, THE GAS IN THE GOMA
PRESSOR OUT ON THE SHORE WILL RUN OUT AND THE AIR WILL BE GONE AND
YOU'LL SUFFOCATE. THE OLD MAN, THE CRAZY OLD MAN! HE WAS *ANGRY*!
HE *Did* KNOW! HE *Was* PREPARED!" THE LETTERS CUT INTO THE MARBLE
LAUGHED AT YOU.



WERE, NOT LIKE THEY SAY, HIGGESS
BARNET BOW HAS HIS HIDE,.. NOW HE'S
DYING IN IT. HE THRASHER AFTER
GOLD AND SETTLED FOR A BULLY-
FUL OF SALT WATER. WELL, THAT'S
MY TREASURE-TROVE. TALE FOR
THIS ISSUE OF ONE'S MORALS

A cartoon illustration of a man with a prominent mustache and a slightly grumpy expression. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. A speech bubble originates from his mouth, containing the text of the poem.



GUNMAN



With the cardboard carton propped against the wall, Ed Grant pressed the door bell: chimes rang inside the apartment and footsteps scurried toward him. The safety latch scraped open, the door swung wide and Ed Grant stepped into the apartment, pushing the carton in front of him. "What... what's this?" the woman asked in surprise, pointing to the carton.

"Delivery," Ed Grant answered, kicking the door shut with his heel. He slipped the latch into place and dumped the carton on the floor. "But I didn't order any..." the woman protested. Then she saw the gun Ed Grant held. "You... a...?"

"A guy working his way through college," Ed Grant said flatly. "Don't make me think you on this test, lady... I want all the cash and jewelry you got here!"

Grant heard a high-pitched voice coming along the corridor from one of the bedrooms, and he turned warily. A cow-headed five-year-old cieened into the room, deeply involved in banking an imaginary aircrat he was piloting. He stopped in his tracks, his mouth gaping. "Hey!" he whinnied. "Who's this, mom?"

"Look, miser," the woman pleaded. "We don't have much money, see? My husband's only a lab assistant at the chemical plant on River Street. He just got outa school himself, and..."

"Can it!" Ed Grant snapped. "C'mon... the CASH! Where's it at?"

The kid, who had sauntered over to the foyer table, suddenly pulled a cap pistol from a toy holster slung over the chair and whirled toward Ed Grant. His finger squeezed the trigger and his high-pitched voice exploded in a series of raucous gunshot sounds. Ed Grant started at the sound, then began to laugh deep in his chest. "The kid's a l'il' whacko, isn't

he?" he snickered. Then, nudging her toward the kitchen with his gun, he added, "Let's find that dough, sister!"

While the woman nervously pulled a purse from a kitchen drawer, the kid grabbed a tiny telephone buried in a toy box and yelped into the receiver. "Sheriff Ambie over here pronto! Vaemunt's robin' my mom!"

Ed Grant tilted his head far back, opened his mouth and roared with delight till tears came to his eyes. For several minutes he shook with uncontrollable mirth. Subsiding slowly, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "The l'il nut," he chortled. "A real character, ain't he? Right outa television!"

The kid's face clouded and he ran from the room. A moment later, as Ed Grant peered into the purse he had grabbed, the boy returned. He held a small water pistol. Ed turned, started to guffaw again. "Jerko, here," he exploded. "A reg'lar half-pint hero, isn't he?"

The boy's face tightened - he squeezed the trigger and a stream of smoky fluid sprayed into Ed Grant's face. He dropped his gun and a shriek of torture poured from Ed Grant's seared lips. He staggered backwards, his eye-sockets now cavities where the eyeballs had just been burnt out of his head. One trembling hand went to his face... passed over the ruined flesh, which was curling away with a bubbling sound, revealing stark yellowish bones beneath. Ed Grant screeched in agony, his face already a ghastly oozing wound. He sagged to the floor.

The boy felt his mother's arm tugging him sleepily, as she yanked the water pistol from him. "Just wait till I tell your daddy what you just did!" she snapped. "He told you a hundred times never to fill your gun with his *sulfuric acid*!"

NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!



"...YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WAS
LISTED IN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
BULLETIN. YOU GOT BACK ISSUES!"

YES, FANS... YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MELVIN, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN
COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE

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AND RECEIVE YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT (WHICH INCLUDES A FULL-COLOR, TAXI-O-LUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SHAZLY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN)... PLUS A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN!

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OR MORE OF YOU WANT TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED
CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S
NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH \$2.50 FOR EACH
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CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH
PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH
MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE
HIS KIT DIRECTLY... PLUS EACH ISSUE OF THE
BULLETIN AS IT COMES OFF THE PRESS.

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB

PO BOX 106
222 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 13, N.Y.

So here's my got! So I could've joined
for half the price a couple of months back?
So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who
says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me
down and send me the stuff what the kids
wearin' and the bulletin I don't want but I'm
payin' for...

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP NO. _____

*(SO WHERE DOWN YON THE LINE FOR THE BULLETIN, SPOT?)

(NOTE: WE HAD TO PAINT THE PERIOD TO GET OUT.)

*(SO MY ADDRESS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1964.)

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Hoh, hoh! Here comes our morded madman with the latest batch of weirdly stamped squares containing weird correspondence from you guys. So I'll just stick my boney nose into the "TELEGRAMS" or "Hannibal! Very funny! Somebody sent a large envelope in a small envelope. A strange trick? Where was it? Oh, yes... so I'll just stick a pair of tweezers into the old mail sack and pluck a few poems and sing for your pleasure!

*June Horrell of The Bronx, N. Y. pens the *Patrol Faculty* to the tune of "I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover".*

I'm running you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before.
The first blade's for chopping.
The second will hook.
The third will rip.
Your head from your neck
No need explaining.
The one remaining
You won't hear anymore
I'm running you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before.

From the creative clow of John H. Gaskin who lives in a box in Watervliet, Mo. comes this Steam Tong Sister of the tune "Heart of my Heart":

Part of my heart,
I love that artless.
Part of my heart,
Bring back a ween to me.
When we were kids
On the corner of the street
We were rough and ready guys,
But, oh, how we could handle horses.
Part of my heart:
Miserable friends were gayer than
Too bad we had no part
I know a tear would grieve
If once more I could listen
To that gang that are part of my heart.

The perky Lindecker Lyrne of the brassworks of Conrad J. Polk, of Chicago, Ill. who pens his at the tune "Swinging in the Rain" with these snappy words:

I
I'm swinging in the rain,
Fast swinging; in the rain
What a ghastly old feeling,
My neck's stretched again
My eyes bulge with pain,
As I grope this refrain
I'm swinging, swinging in the rain

II

The trap has been sprung,
My neck has been wrung,
My courage is just droppin',
I know that I'm done.
My face is all red,
I know that I'm dead,
I'm swinging, swinging in the rain.

Clara Rosella Crossland of McKeesport, Pa. who claims to be a poet in the pretty artistic sense of the word, submits this lovely little ronson to pluck your heart strings:

My boyfriend is a charming thing
I love him 'cause he is so green
One side of his ugly face is gone,
The other hangs with reddest meat

Raymond Norman of Chicago, Ill. writes these poetic words:

Oh, for the life of a vampire,
That's what I really crave
To prowl the face of earth at night,
And sleep each day in a grave

*John Neidhardt of Mayfield, N. Y. submits his *Just like you:**

Blood and Guts
All over the street,
And me without
A spoon to eat

Paul Block and Douglas Turbman (they had to collaborate on this one, yet) of Elmhurst, N. Y. knock a famous nursery rhyme upside:

Hickory Dickory Dock
The mouse went down the clock

Well, enough art. Now for a lesson.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I was walking down the street reading my latest EC, when all of a sudden there was a scratch, a scratch, and a man lay on the road. He had been hit by a car. The car sped away I can never see what I could do. The man lay there and said, "I'm dying! Help me!" So I helped him. My sentence is going to be carried out next Monday. Bob Wilson
Niagara Falls, N. Y.

*And now, as the spuds left, the commanding A. sub
reception to this may well set you back \$7.00 for eight
hours—meals not included—and all that art. The ad-
dress for art orders, poetry, comment, and whatever
is:*

*The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 44
223 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.*

HERE'S A TERROR-TALE OF A CHICK WHO FINALLY WORMED

The PROPOSAL



PEARL HAD ALWAYS LIVED LUXURIOUSLY IN THE BEST OF STYLE—WITH FINE CLOTHES, JEWELRY, A PARK AVENUE APARTMENT, AND A CHAUFFEURED CADILLAC. AND PEARL HAD ALWAYS MANAGED TO FIND RICH HUSBANDS WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO KEEP HER IN THE STYLE TO WHICH SHE'D BECOME ACCUSTOMED, LIKE FREDDY HOWELL, FOR INSTANCE. FREDDY HOWELL WAS PEARL'S LATEST RICH-HUSBAND-SAUPODIL. HE WAS, THAT IS, UNTIL HE ANNOUNCED...

"WE'RE DIVORCED, PEARL.
I'M GOING BACK TO
MY WIFE!"

"SHE'S?...
WHY, YOU
CHEAP NO-
GOOD..."



"NOW, FREDDIE WAS GONE. PEARL HAD JUST ANOTHER BILL-PEEPING HUSBAND, AND THE ADULT WED AT THE PENTHOUSE DOOR. PEARL WAS DESPERATE. A DOZEN DESPERATE PLANS WERE FORMULATED IN HER PRETTY RED HEAD AND DISCARDED BEFORE SHE REMEMBERED THE QUIET, GENTLE, SOLEMN MAN ACROSS THE HALL...

"OF COURSE, HE MIGHT HAVE MORE MONEY OR HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO LIVE IN THIS GLORIFIED CAGE. HE'LL BE A PUSHOVER FOR LITTLE PEARL..."



"SHE WRAPPED HER FLINCH BLACK MOULTRIE AROUND HER SHAPELY FIGURE AND STEPPED BOLLY INTO THE HALL AS HOWARD ELLIS LOOKED HIS APARTMENT DOOR BEHIND HIM AND TURNED TO THE ELEVATOR...

"I SAW YOUR PERSON, BUT DO IT'S GULP...
YOU HAVE THE FINGER MY BROTHER IT'S NINE-
SIDES TO HAVE STOPPED THIRTY..."



PEARL LET HOWARD STARE. SHE LET HER EYES TRAVEL OVER HER FULL YOUNG BODY JUST LONG ENOUGH. THEN, SHE PUT ON THE SHY EMBARRASSMENT ACT...

OH, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, MR. HOWARD. WHERE ARE YOU GOING? I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME! I'M PEARL DRAKE! MISS PEARL DRAKE!

ELLERY HOWARD ELLIS! I... I WELL, HERE'S THE ELEVATOR!

PEARL IMMEDIATELY CURSED THE HIGH SPEED ELEVATOR THAT HAD RUSHED UPWARD THROUGH THE STEEL THROAT OF THE BUILDING AND INTERRUPTED HER PROGRESS. SHE TURNED AND GLIDED BACK TO HER APARTMENT AS THE ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSED.

GOOD MORNING, MR. ELLIS... AND THANK YOU FOR THE FINE!

NOT AT ALL, MISS DRAKE...

She closed the door, leaned back distractingly against it, and frowned...

I WONDER IF I OVERPRAISED MY AGENT WALKING OUT LIKE THIS? I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO THINK I'M A CHEAP FEMALE WOLF ON THE PROWL. HE LOOKS SO PROPER AND PRESTIGIOUS. I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE IF HE THOUGHT THAT!



THEN PEARL BREATHED. SHE WALKED SLOWLY ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM, HER VOLUMINOUS FIGURE SWAYING SENSUOUSLY...

BUT HE IS A MAN! HE'S GOT ALL OF THE INSTINCTS OF A MAN. I'LL BET HE CAN'T GET ME OFF HIS MIND!

SHE STOPPED AT THE DESK, HER MIND RACING... SCHEMING, PLANNING HER NEXT MOVE. SHE FIGURED THE DEPOSITS SHE RECEIVED IN THE MORNING WOULD...

THEY'VE GIVEN ME A WEEK TO FARM OVER THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS HERE OR OUT ON THE STREET I GO. AND I haven't GOT IT. I haven't GOT HALF THAT MUCH!



PEARL PONDERED HER PROBLEM ANOTHER MOMENT AND THEN, WITH HER LOVELY FACE ASSUMING A DETERMINED AIR, SHE HURRIED INTO THE BEDROOM TO DRESS...

MR. HOWARD ELLIS IS MY ONEOFF! I've GOT TO GET HIM—ONE WAY OR THE OTHER!

THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR EYES HER UP AND DOWN AND GRINNED lasciviously when she asked him the information she needed. IT WAS OBVIOUS HE'D HEARD OF HER PLIGHT...

I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHAT MR. ELLIS DOES FOR A LIVING? WHAT FIRM HE WORKS FOR?

WHY DON'T YOU FIND OUT WHAT I CAN DO, INSTEAD, HONEY?



PEARL KNEW WHEN TO ACT HAUGHTY AND INDOMITABLE. UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR MIGHT HAVE AROUSED HER INTERESTS, BUT NOW...

WHY YOU FRESH...



SHE STOOD PRUD AND TRUMPTANT AS SHE PLUNGED HER BETTY-RED CHEEK WHERE SHE'D SLAPPED IT. THEN, SHE COOLLY REPEATED...

I ASKED YOU IF... ME... HE'S A
YOU KNOW MR. ELLIS? STOCK
BROKER.

E... I THINK HE
HAS HIS OWN
FIRM!



PEARL CRUISED THE LOBBY TO THE PHONE BOOTHS AND SCANNED THE CITY DIRECTORY...

ELLIEH... ELLER... ELLIE, AH,
HERE IT IS! HOWARD ELLIS AND
ASSOCIATES, INC., STOCK BROKERS,
INVESTMENT COUNSELORS, 231
WALL STREET...



OUTSIDE THE LUXURIOUS APARTMENT, PEARL CONTEMPLATED HAILING A CAB, THEN CONSIDERED HER WAITING FINANCES, AND WALKED UP THE SIDE STREET TO THE BURDEN. SHE RODE UNCOMFORTABLY IN THE CROWDED ROARING CARS, HER DIGNITY MORE TWITCHING SCORNFULLY AT THE SUFFOCATING SCENT OF THE HUMANITY SURROUNDING HER. SHE TRIED TO USE HERSELF IN HER PLAN OF STRATEGY...

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM OUTSIDE THE
BROKERS' LUNCH HOUSE, OF COURSE.
IT WILL BE AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING.



I SEE YOUR PARDON,
BUT AM I DIGHT
SEE...

I'M SORRY! IT WAS ALL
MY FAULT! I... WHO, IT'S
MR. ELLIS!



AT NOON, PEARL WAS AT THE ENTRANCE TO 231 WALL STREET, HER CANARY FOR THE CONQUEST OF THE UNSUSPECTING MR. ELLIS CRYSTAL-CLEAR IN HER BIRD...

I'LL COME IN AND TAKE ME TO
LUNCH AND WE'LL SEE IF I'M NO
CHEAP GAYMEY! WE'LL SEE IF I
GOT HIGH-CLASS TASTES! I
WE'LL... OH-OH! HERE HE
COMES... AND HERE I GO...



MR. ELLIS! THIS IS A COINCIDENCE, RUNNING OH,
INTO YOU LIKE THIS. OH, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW... YES...
WANT ME IN MY CLOTHES, DO YOU? I MEAN I MISS
THESE CLOTHES, REMEMBER THIS... DRAKE
MORNING? PEARL DRAKE? THE
PENTHOUSE APARTMENT ACROSS
THE HALL?



BEFORE HOWARD COULD OBJECT, PEARL STEERED HIM TO A TAXI, TOOK HIS HAND, AND LED HIM INTO IT AFTER HER...

YOU DO REMEMBER WELL I OWE YOU SOMETHING FOR BEING SO KIND THIS MORNING, MR. ELLIS. I'M THINKING YOU TO DINNER, THE PLAZA, DICK!

THE PLAZA? BUT THAT'S NOT UPTOWN, MISS GARNET...



BY THE TIME THEY'D PULLED UPTOWN THROUGH THE TRAFFIC AND ARRIVED AT THE SWAN PLAZA DINING ROOM, PEARL'S EULOGIUM HAD WARMED THE SHY MILLIONAIRE...

FIGGIE SOUSSE, HOWARD, AND THE ROAST PIGEON AND MUSHROOM UNDER GLASS SOUNDS DELICIOUS...

HAVE YOU GOT THAT, WAITER? I'LL HAVE A RARE SANDWICH ON WHOLE WHEAT TOAST AND A GLASS OF MILK...



THROUGH THE MEAL, PEARL CAREFULLY ENCOURAGED HOWARD. BY DESERT, HE WAS STRUGGLING TO SAY SOMETHING. BY COUSSE-CAFÉ, HE FINALLY SUMMONED UP THE COURAGE TO PUT HIS HAND ON HER... AND BLURT...

PEARL... HUH... MAY I TAKE YOU TO DINNER AND A SHOW... TONIGHT?

OH, I'D ADORE THAT, HOWARD



AND THAT NIGHT, AFTER THEIR DATE, THEY RETURNED TO THE PENTHOUSE FLOOR OF THE LUSH PARK AVENUE APARTMENT HOUSE... PEARL DRENCHED HER COAT AND SPOKE TEMPTILY IN A SOFT HONEYED TONE...

WON'T YOU THANK TELL ME, PEARL. COME IN FOR A BOARD AND TELL ME MEETING IN THE MORNING AND I MUST GET TO WORK...

THANK YOU, PEARL. I HAVE A BOARD MEETING IN THE MORNING AND I MUST GET TO WORK...



SO AFTER A BACK "BODCRAFT" PEARL FOUND HERSELF ALONE IN HER APARTMENT, FRUSTRATED AND ANXIOUS...



BUT HOWARD ELLIS PHONED PEARL THE NEXT DAY FROM HIS OFFICE AND HER CONFIDENCE IN HER EVENTUAL SUCCESS WAS RESTORED...

WELL, PEARL I WOULD IT'S SUCH A LOVELY DAY, IT IS TONIGHT, HOME, I'D RATHER NOT BE INSIDE. LET'S TAKE A RIDE THROUGH THE PARK!



PEARL KNEW WHERE TO FIND ATMOSPHERE CONSIDERATE TO ROMANCE. THE RIDE THROUGH THE PARK IN THE HANSON CAR WAS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR HAD ORDERED. SOON, HOWARD WAS HOLDING HER HAND AND WHISPERING SOFTLY

IT'S A LOVELY NIGHT, PEARL... BUT NOT NEARLY AS LOVELY AS YOU ARE...

WHY, HOWARD...



PEARL WAS AN OLD HABIT AT THIS GAME OF TRAPPING A MAN. SHE KNEW HOW TO PRESS HER ADVANTAGE... HOW TO MOVE HER BUTT TILL LIPS CLOSE TO HIS INVITING...

OH, PEARL...



SHE KISSED HIM WITH MOST REVIVING HUNGRY LIPS. SHE KISSED HIM AS SHE KNEW HE'D NEVER BEEN KISSED BEFORE, AND THEN SHE LEFT HIM STANDING THERE... LIMP... TREMBLING... GASPING FOR BREATH. SHE LOCKED THE DOOR BETWEEN THEM AND STOOD IN THE DARKNESS OF HER APARTMENT, GRINNING WITH SATISFACTION...

ONE MORE LIKE THAT AND HE'LL BE SICKENED... AND IT'S BETTER TO GOON! I'VE ONLY GOT A FEW DAYS LEFT BEFORE I GET KICKED OUT!



SHE WATCHED THIS WEALTHY MID-VICTORIAN PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER BANANILY, SHE LISTENED... SHOCKED, TO THE WORDS HE CAREFULLY ENUNCIATED IN A FIRM, ALMOST FORMAL MANNER...

PEARL, I WANT YOU
FOR MY WIFE!

WHAT???



AND SHE KNEW HOW TO ACT SHY AND COY AND SURPRISED WHEN HE'D FINALLY FALLEN INTO HER LITTLE TRAP...

I'M SORRY, I... I DIDN'T PEARL, I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT...

HOWARD, HOWEVER, HAVE DONE THAT...

I'M VERY FOND OF YOU!



SOON THEY WERE BACK OUTSIDE HER APARTMENT. PEARL LEANED AGAINST HOWARD, FINGERING HOWARD'S COAT LAPEL AND GENTLY, GENTLY DRAWING HIM AGAINST HER SWEATING BODY... WHISPERS...

KISS ME AGAIN, HOWARD... PEARL...

HOWARD...



IT WAS WARM THE NEXT EVENING, THERE WAS NO MOON AND THE SKY HUNG DARK OVERHEAD. PEARL COULD SENSE THE DEEP TENSION IN HOWARD AS THEY WALKED HOME. SHE WAITED PATIENTLY. HE STOPPED BENEATH A LAMP POST AND HE HAD A NEW, DARKER DETERMINED LOOK IN HIS EYES...

PEARL! I... I... I NEED YOU! I... WANT YOU!

OH, HOWARD! IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW BRAVE I MADE YOU!



THIS WAS BEYOND PEARL'S WILDEST DREAMS. HAD SHE HEARD RIGHT? WAS THIS A PROPOSAL? NOW IT WAS PEARL WHO WAS NERVOUS. THIS CHARACTER WAS PLAYING FOR KEELS, NOT FOR A MONTH, A YEAR, FOREVER. SHE HAD TO ASK HIM AGAIN...

HOWARD, ARE YOU SURE?
YOU DON'T KNOW ME!

I KNOW YOU WELL
ENOUGH TO WANT YOU
FOR MY WIFE, PEARL!



PEARL WAS ECSTATIC. SHE GLOWED IN HER UNSHOED-FOOT TRIUMPH, AND WHEN HE ASKED...

"WILL YOU COME UP... OH, YES, TO MY APARTMENT?" HOWARD REPLIED.
PEARL...



THEY WENT UP... HE, HOLDING HER HAND IN A TIGHT FEVERISH GRIP, HIS BREATHING QUICKENED WITH EXCITEMENT... AND SHE, FOLLOWING EAGERLY, ANXIOUS TO CONVINCE HIM OF HIS WIFE'S CHOICE, ANXIOUS TO THANK HIM...

"IN HERE... THE BEDROOM..."

"YES, HOWIE..."



HE SPEDED THE BEDROOM DOOR AND SHOVED PEARL IN. SHE HEARD THE LOCK CLICK BEHIND HIM... HEARD HIS LOW THROATED SMILE. SHE PEERED INTO THE BLISS...

ESTHER? I BROUGHT ANOTHER ONE...

ESTHER? WHO'S SHE?



AND THEN PEARL SAW THE COFFIN IN THE BLISS... THE OLD COFFIN WITH THE LID SQUARELY OPEN... THE PALE, FIGURE RISING FROM IT... BITS OF EARTH DROPPING FROM ITS FLOATING BLACK CAPE... THE RAZOR-SHARP SNAKE-LIKE PANEL, THE SIZING BRITTLE...

"MY GOD! WHAT IS IT... HOWIE! WHAT IS IT?"

"THIS IS MY WIFE, PEARL! SHE'S A VAMPIRE!"



HOWARD PUSHED PEARL TOWARDS THE FROTHING, GROWING, HIDEOUS CREATURE...

"I TOLD YOU I WANTED YOU FOR MY WIFE!"

"NO, NO!"

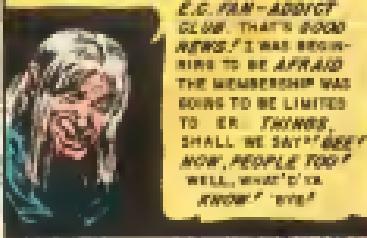
"OH, LORD!"



AND HOWARD SAT DOWN AND WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS HIS LIVING-DEAD WIFE SPREADS UPON THIS LATEST BREWING VICTIM HE'D BROUGHT. HE LISTENED EAGERLY TO HER SLUTTONOUS SLURPING NOSES... HE ROUGED APPROVINGLY AS THE PINK GLOW CAME BACK INTO HER SUNKEN CHEEKS, AND PEARL'S WRITHING BODY SREW FAIRER AND FAIRER AND FAIRER.



SO POOR PEARL FINALLY FOUND HER LAST HOST... AND... SECURE? ONLY IN THIS CASE, IT WAS THE HUSBAND'S WIFE WHO WAS THE SUGAR, SUGAR-SUCKER, THAT IS HER, HEE WELL, THE OLD BITCH, WHATEVER WITH ANOTHER OF HER GREEZY CAULDRON-CONTROVERSIES TO TELL. STEP ASIDE WHILE THE SUMS SLIME AT YOU. BY THE WAY, I HEAR SOME PEOPLE FINALLY JOINED THE C.G. FAN-ADDOCT CLUB. THAT'S GOOD NEWS! I WAS BEGINNING TO BE AFRAID THE MEMBERSHIP WAS GOING TO BE LIMITED TO ER... SHOONES. SHALL WE SAY? NOW, PEOPLE TOO? WELL, WHAT'D YA SAY? ER...



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! COME IN, CREEP. YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR RETRIBUTION... THE HAUNT OF FEAR, AND, MAY I SAY? I THOUGHT FRENCH, FRENCH!... HAVE I GOT A REVOLVING TALE FOR YOU, WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S COOKING IN MY GRIMY CAST-IRON CAULDRON? WELL, YOUR OLD WITCH HAS A SHINY BLADE OF BRAVELY BORN ABOUT A TERROR TIME AND A FAST OPERATOR WHO BROUGHT A MEASLY MATTER TO A HEAD AND CUT IT OFF THERE! SO WINE THE DRAGOON FROM YOUR CHIN, SWING YOUR FLOPPY EARS THIS WAY, AND LISTEN TO THIS DELIGHTFUL TALE OF BUTCHERY CALLED...

The Sliceman Cometh

THAT 10TH OF MARCH, 1793, WAS GRIM AND GRIEVE WITH RAIN THREATENING IN THE OMINOUS BLACK CLOUDS THAT BILLLOWED OVERHEAD. A RAW WIND HOWLED FURIOUSLY ABOUT THE CRIMSON-STAINED BULLTOILE, BUT IT COULD NOT CLEAR THE REPULSED AIR OF ITS ALEXATOR AROMA. UNDERFOOT ZOMBIES WERE SLIPPERY WITH CONGEALING GORE; JUICY FRESH BLOOD BUBBLED IN A CONSTANT FLOW DOWN THE GUTTERS AS THE GREAT BLACK RIBBED DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN, HEAVING THE BASKET WITH WIDE-EYED HORROR HEADS THERE. CALMLY, STOOD THE MAN OF THE HOUR, THE EXECUTIONER, ANDRE' MARIE AND THE JUDGEMENT, HOOOTHE-RED-BONNETED CITIZENRY, READING AN URGENT MESSAGE JUST HANDED TO HIM...

"AND IF A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS INTEREST YOU, THEN VISIT ME AT 48, RUE D'ABOIS." HMM? PIERRE, I MUST LEAVE! CARRY ON FOR ME!"

"A PLEASURE, ANDRE..."



AS ANDRE HURRIED AWAY FROM THE AWFUL SCENE, HIS BLOOD-SOAKED SHOES LEAVING RED IMPRINTS ON THE RAVING STONES, HE EAGERLY RE-READ THE NOTE HE'D RECEIVED.

"A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS? SACRE BLEU."



SOON, THE EXECUTIONER WAS BEING UNHELD INTO A SPACIOUS ROOM OF HIS FINE HOUSE BY A VENERABLE LOOKING MAN WITH AN UNCTUOUS WARMER ABOUT HIM...

MR. VACHE! I AM JEAN COURBEAU, IT IS A GREAT HONOR PROUD TO HAVE SO IMPORTANT AND DISTINGUISHED A VISITOR AS PEG IN MY HOME...



YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT ONE THOUSAND GOLD LOUITS, CITIZEN COURBEAU. THAT IS WHY I AM HERE.

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, MR. VACHE...

SOME OF THE FINEST WINE

FROM MY CELLAR

AND MORE... I

WILL EXPLAIN

WHY I SENT FOR YOU...

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, MR. VACHE...

SOME OF THE FINEST WINE

FROM MY CELLAR

AND MORE... I

WILL EXPLAIN

WHY I SENT FOR YOU...

ACTUALLY, THIS HOUSE IS NOT MINE. IT BELONGS TO MY BROTHER CLAUDE. BEING THE ELDER, MY FATHER LEFT HIM EVERYTHING... A FORTUNE, ETC. SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN TO CLAUDE, I'D BET IT ALL. YOU UNDERSTAND?



YOU WANT ME TO RID YOU OF YOUR BROTHER, CITIZEN COURBEAU? SORRY! YOU INSISTE I WOULD MURDER A MAN... EVEN FOR THAT MUCH GOLD?

NOT NECESSARILY. MR. VACHE, MERELY AN ACCUSATION TO THE RIGHT PARTIES, AND THE HEAD OF ANOTHER ROYALIST SYNPATHEZER WOULD ROLL INTO YOUR BASKET.



HERE IS HALF THE PAYMENT... 500 GOLD LOUITS. YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REST WHEN I HAVE PROOF THAT MY BROTHER HAS BEEN EXECUTED! SO MANY HEADS FALL THESE DAYS...

YOU SHALL HAVE UNDENIABLE EVIDENCE, CITIZEN COURBEAU. I WILL SEE TO IT AND HOW, BOY BOY...



ALL THAT IS A DIFFERENT STORY. MR. VACHE, I'M NOT COURBEAU. IF YOUR BROTHER IS ONE OF THEM... A ROYALIST...

THEN I WILL BE READ TO DESPOSE

HIM. IT WOULD BE MY DUTY!

YOU ARE A WISE MAN, MR. VACHE. DO NOT THINK I AM NOT FOND OF MY BROTHER. BUT THERE ARE TWO THINGS I LOVE MORE: FRANCE AND MONEY!

YOU ARE A WISE

MAN, MR. VACHE.

DO NOT THINK I AM

NOT FOND OF MY

BROTHER. BUT THERE

ARE TWO THINGS I

LOVE MORE: FRANCE

AND MONEY!

AND SO, THAT VERY DAY, ANDRE VACHE MADE HIS ACCUSATION...

I HAVE IT FROM HIS OWN BROTHER'S LIPS, CITIZEN MARAT! CLAUDE COURBEAU IS IN FULL SYNPATHEZER WITH THE ROYALISTS; DESPISES THE NEWLY-FORMED REPUBLIC WE WOULD BETRAY IT AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY...

ORDER

THE

ARREST

OF CLAUDE

COURBEAU!



THE NEXT DAY, CITIZEN MARAT AND HIS OTHER JUDGES OF THE COMMUNE LEANED DOWN COLDLY AND IMPERSONALLY AT THE ACCUSED...

I AM NOT AN ENEMY OF THE REVOLUTION. WHEN AN INNOCENT MAN CAN BE DRAGGED FROM HIS HOME ON THE FLINTEST OF PRETEXTS, ACCUSED OF TREASON, WITHOUT A SHRED OF EVIDENCE, AND SENT TO THE BULLETTINE BY SUCH A LIE... THEN THIS IS NOT A TRIAL, BUT MANTON AUTOMATON!



THE CHAMBER, THROBBED WITH ANGRY RABBED CITIZENS, SHOUT WITH THE HORSE CLAMORING FOR STILL ANOTHER HEAD...



CITIZEN MARAT HELD UP HIS HAND AND A HUSH FELL OVER THE CHAMBER. THEN, BLOWING BARKLY AT THE ACCUSED, HE WHISPERED...



HE LOOKED AT HIS FELLOW JUDGES...



CITIZEN MARAT RAISED HIS HAND AND DROPPED A SQUARE OF BLACK SCAPE... AND WITH THIS SYMBOLIC APPROVAL...



ANDRE VACHE LES CLAUSÉS TO THE MONSTROUS MACHINE AS SHITTING NEEDLES CLICSED AND THE THROAT JERRED...



THE RED-BONNETED CROWD WAITED IN TENSE SILENCE AS THE HEAVY KNIFE WAS HOISTED HIGH BETWEEN THE BLUTTED PARALLEL BLADES. THEN, WITH A WHIMSY CREEKING TO ACCOMPANY THE BAZOR-SHARP BLADE'S DESCENT, THE CROWD EXPLODED IN A LUSTY CHEER AS IT HIT... CUTTING THROUGH FLESH AND BONE... SLAMMING INTO THE BLOCK...



ANDRE CAUGHT CLAUDE'S HEAD IN A SACK AS HOT BLOOD SPURTED FROM THE SEVERED VEINS AND ARTERIES OF THE DECAPITATED BODY, SPRAYING HIS FACE AND CLOTHES. HE HELD UP THE HEAD-HEAVY SACK WITH A TRUMPHANT GRIN. THE CROWD CRIED...



JEAN COURBEAU TURNED SICKLY GREEN. HE WHIMPERED SOFTLY...

TAKE YOUR MONEY! HERET! MIGHT GET... GET IT OUT OF HERET! CHOKE... GET RID OF IT!



HE MOVED THROUGH THE SILENT DESERTED STREETS, HEARING THE CHEERS FROM THE Guillotine Square AND THINKING ONLY OF THE GOLD HE HAD CARRIED. BEFORE LONG, HE ARRIVED AT 49 RUE DU RUE...



YOU ASKED FOR PROOF, CITIZEN COURBEAU?

AH... YOU BROUGHT MY BROTHER'S CLOTHES?

ANDRE VACHE REACHED INTO THE SACK, PULLED FORTH ITS CONTENTS, AND HELD IT DAZZLING BY THE HAIR.



BETTER THAN THAT! - I CHOKE... I BROUGHT THIS! LOOK!

ANDRE WENT LIGHT-HEARTEDLY THROUGH THE EVENING STREETS, THE GOLD JINGLING IN HIS POCKETS, THE SACK SWINGING MERRILY AT HIS SIDE. A COACH RUMBLED BY, AND HE PLAYFULLY THROWN THE RED-SACKED SACK THROUGH ITS WINDOW...



THE COACH STOPPED. A TALL MAN GOT OUT AND CARRIED THE BODY BURGLE BACK TO ANDRE...

DO YOU TAKE OUR REVOLVING LIGHTLY? CITIZEN! YOU SPEAK TO ME! WHO, MAD-TER OF THE HEAD OF AN ENEMY?

TAKE CARE, CITIZEN! YOU SPEAK TO ME! WHO, MAD-TER OF THE HEAD OF AN ENEMY?

THE MAN WALKED ANDRE THE BACK...

AND I, CITIZEN VACHE, AM MASTER OF FRANCE! I THOU-ROBBESPERRE! PARIS, YOUR EXCELLENCE!



THE COACH RUMBLED OFF AND ANDRE WALKED ON, DETERMINED TO RID HIMSELF OF THE HEAD. AS HE CROSSED ONE OF THE SEVEN BRIDGES, HE THROWN IT OVER THE PARAPET...

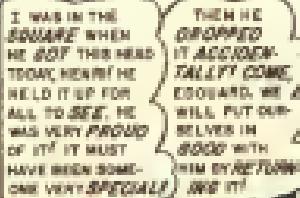


ANDRE DID NOT SEE THE SACK LAND IN THE BOTTOM OF A SHIFT THAT CAME FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE AND THE HEAD ROLLED OUT AND THE FISHERMAN GASPED.



WHAT DO YOU SAY?
WHAT KIND OF
FIENDISH JOKES
IS THIS?

LOOK! IT IS
YACQUE, THE
EXECUTIONER!



I WAS IN THE
SQUARE WHEN
HE BOF THIS HEAD
TO ME, HEAR? HE
HELD IT UP FOR
ALL TO SEE. HE
WAS VERY PROUD
OF IT! IT MUST
HAVE BEEN SOME-
ONE VERY SPECIAL!

THEN HE
GARROTED
IT ACCIDENTALLY
COME, COOARD. HE
WILL PUT OUR
BELIEVE IN
GOOD WITH
HIM BY RETURN-
ING IT!

WHEN ANDRE RETURNED TO HIS ROOMING HOUSE, HE WAS GREETED BY HIS LANDLADY, MADAME MARIE...

TWO CITIZENS LEFT
JANE FOR YOU, M'SIEU
IT IS
IMPOSSIBLE.



ANDRE HURRIED OUT INTO THE STREET WITH THE BLOOD-SOAKED SACK. HE STOPPED OVER A SEWER-SHIFT...

ERANNE, CLAUDE GOURBEAU! SO THEY PLAY
GAMES WITH US! WELL, PERHAPS THE RATS
DOWN THERE WILL FIND YOU TEMPTING...



ANDRE STOOD OVER THE SPINNING HEAD, HIDING
IT FROM THE CART-OWNER'S VIEW...

I'W IN NO HURRY WAHE. LET LET ME
WE STOP FOR A GRANT! OUR
ALONE, SOON
HEADLESS FRIENDS CAN
WAITS!

ALONE, SOON
TO BURN
YOUR FOOL-
DWELLING
GEASY!



THE HEAD DROPPED TO ANDRE'S FEET AS IT TORE THROUGH THE
SACK'S BLOOD-SOAKED BOTTOM. THE CLOTH DISAPPEARED
INTO THE DARK-ROCKING SACK. ANDRE HESITATED, STUPIDLY,
AS AN OCTAVI, HEADED WITH HEADLESS CORPSES, ROUNDED THE
CORNER...



BONIN SHRUGGED AND THE CI-CART RUMBLED OFF. ANDRE
TURNED TO THE HEAD, ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED. HE REACHED
FOR IT SAYABLE...



TORMENT ME WILL FOR, CLAUDE GOURBEAU!
WELL, I'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

THE EXECUTIONER CAME UPON A MARKET OPEN LATE AND IT STILT BY OIL LAMPS. HE PASSED THE WALLS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND SMILED AT THE JOKE HE MADE...

"WOW, SIRIES HOBSON, IN AMONG THE CABBAGES WITH YOU, BEWARE, AND PERHAPS YOU WILL END UP IN SOMEBODY'S SOUP."



FREE AT LAST OF HIS PRINCIPAL BURDEN, ANDRÉ CELEBRATED HIS NEW-FOUND FORTUNE AT AN INN WITH A GLASS OF BRANDY. THEN HE RETURNED HOME AND, MEETING HIS LANDLADY, SOON NATURALLY RELIEVED HER OF HER SHOPPING BASKET...



THEY ENTERED THE RICHARD HOUSE TOGETHER AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN.

"YOU SEEM IN A JOYFUL MOOD TONIGHT, CITIZEN VACHE!"



CLAUDE COURBEAU'S HEAD GRIMMED UP AT ANDRÉ FROM AMONG THE VEGETABLES MADAM BARTETTE UNPLETED DROPPED ONTO THE KITCHEN TABLE...



THE LANDLADY WOKE AND TURNED ANGRY, KICK ANDRÉ, SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY, FLUNG OPEN THE SHUTTERS AND THREW THE BARBECUE-LIKE SKULL INTO THE DARK STREET BELOW...



A MOMENT LATER, MEANWHILE ETIENNE, ANOTHER BOAINDER, ENTERED... ON HIS DOUR FACE, A LOOK MORE OF PATHOS THAN ANGER... IN HIS HAND, THE HEAD...



...A MORE FURIOUS, THE BLOOD DRAINING FROM HIS FACE... HE SEIZED A CLEAVER FROM THE TABLE, THEN TURNED AND SMASHED THE HEAD FROM MONSIEUR ETIENNE...



ANDRE STUMBBLED TO HIS ROOM AND WITH A RAGE THAT VERBED ON MADNESS, HE KNEELED ON THE FLOOR AND HACKED AT THE LIFELESS FLESH AND BONE UNTIL HE'D REDUCED IT INTO AN UNRECOGNIZABLE HUMLP OF BLOOD-WEAT.

"NOW, LET'S SEE YOU COME BACK! NOW! NOW!"



THEN, WEAK AND EXHAUSTED, HIS INTESTINES ROLING AND GLUTTERING LIKE JELLY, THE EXECUTIONER SAW ON HIS BED IN A COMA-LIKE STUPOR.

SEE... BOB...



AN HOUR PASSED. PARIS WAS ASLEEP. THE NIGHT WAS STILL, EXCEPT FOR AN OR-CART THAT RUMBLED BY BELOW. ANDRE STIRRUS AT ITS NOISE AND SAT UP. HE LISTENED TO THE FRONT DOOR OPEN, THE HEAVY DRASSING FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS... THE KNOCK OF HIS OWN DOOR TURN... AND THEN...



THE HEADLESS CORPSE STUMBBLED TOWARD ANDRE, ITS HAND RESTLESSLY TOWARD ITS NECK, PANTING.

"YOUR HEAD! YOU'VE GONE FOR YOUR HEAD!! OH, LORD, SHO'E... I CAN'T GIVE IT TO YOU! THERE... ON THE FLOOR... THERE IS... WHAT'S LEFT OF IT...



THE DECAPITATED BODY HESITATED, AS IF BEWILDERED AS TO WHAT TO DO. THEN IT GRABBED FORWARD AGAIN... REACHING FOR ANDRE, REACHING, REACHING...



MADAME BARETTE HEARD THE EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM THAT ECHOED THROUGH HER ROARING HOUSE AND RUSHED TO ANDRE'S ROOM WITH A CANDLE. BUT AS SHE REACHED THE DOOR, IT DARRIED. THE BODY OF CLAUDE COURBEAU STUMBBLED OUT, AND ON ITS SHOULDERS, CRIMSON DRENING FROM ITS TORN AND RUPTURED BLOOD VESSELS, SAT THE SKINLESS, TORN-OFF HEAD OF ANDRE VACHE.



HEE, HEE! WELL, THAT'S ONLY WAY TO GET ANDRE IN THE WORLD, ER, KIDDIES! AND NOW IT'S TIME TO GADGET ON!'S BUCK-SAD FOR THIS ISSUE! WHERE YOU WERENT BORED STUFF! WELL, ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR - WHEN WE'LL BE READING BACK YOUR WAY WITH MORE TOP HORROR FARMERS! TILL THEN!

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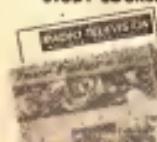
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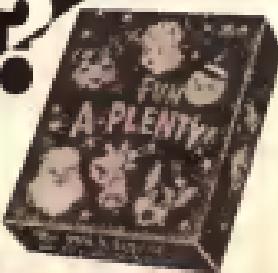
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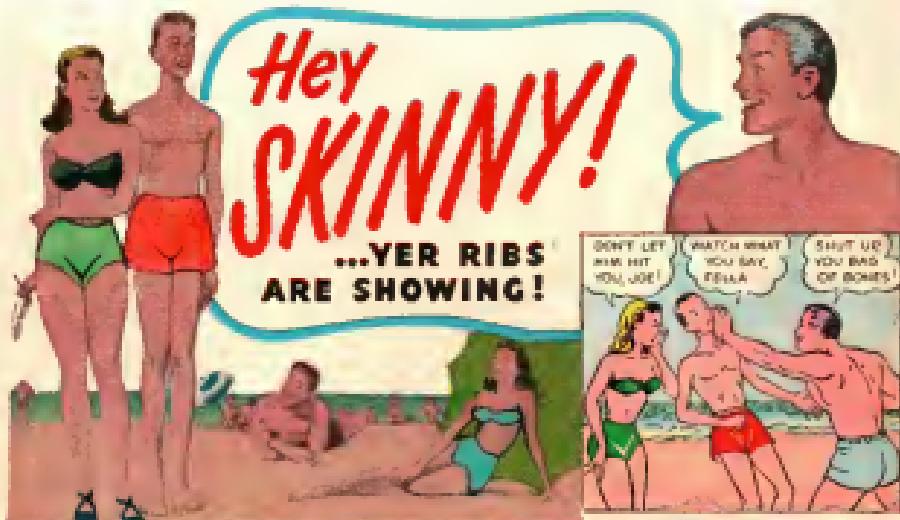
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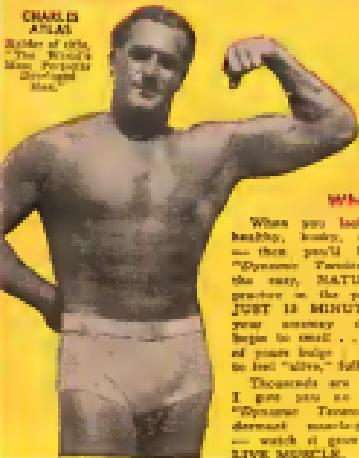


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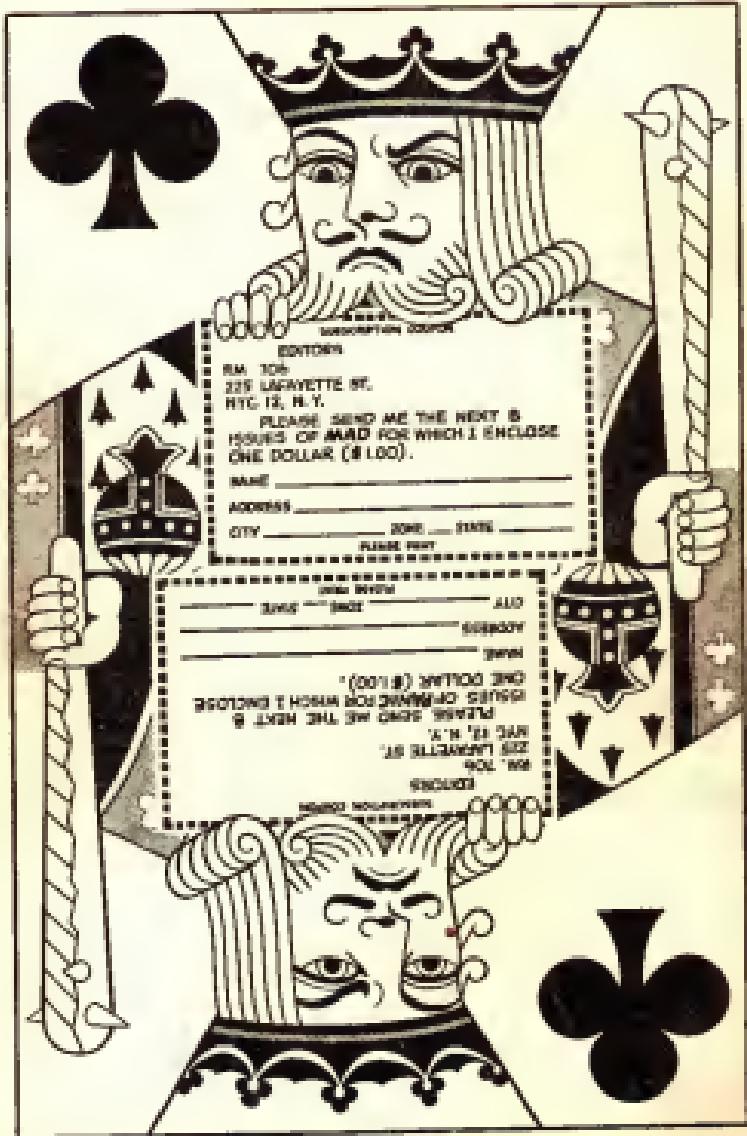


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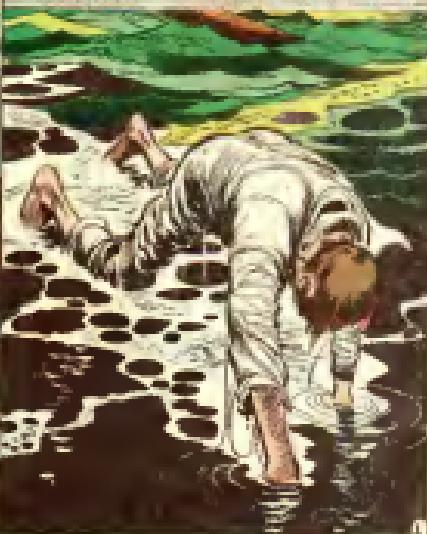
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! MERRAGE, ANYONE? FINEY! YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT CREEP-COURT, CAUSE THAT'S MY BACKET! AH, YOUR OLD CRYPT-KEEPER IS JUST FLOWING WITH JADEST TODAY. HOW ABOUT SONG FOR A RIDEY? I'LL DRIVE YOU AHOY. READY? THEN WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, I'LL START OFF MY MORBID MAG WITH AN ISLEY ISLAND STORY OF A STARVING SAILOR AND A RAVENOUS RAT. I CALL THIS RIDICULOUSLY HORRIBLE HUNK OF HISTORY...

TELESCOPE



THE S.S. BRAMWELL WAS NO MATCH FOR THE VIOLENT SOUTH SEA TOWERS. THE MIGHTY WIND HURLED HER UPON A REEF AND SHE FOUNDERED IN EIGHT BATHS OF JADEY BLUE. SOON, THE STORM WAS SPENT, THE SHIP GONE, AND THERE REMAINED BUT ONE HUMAN SURVIVOR...A SEAMAN...ERIC WILFORD. HE CLUNG DESPERATELY TO A FLOATING PLANK TILL IT REACHED THE SHALLOWS OFF A SMALL ISLAND ISLE. THEN, Helpless, he crawled to the sandy shore...



BUT ERIC WAS NOT THE ONLY SURVIVOR. A RAT, HALF-BROWNED AND FRIGHTENED, HAD CLUNG TO THE OTHER END OF THE SAME PLANK, AND NOW IT, TOO, STRUGGLED ASHORE.



THE RAT AND THE MAN WERE THE ONLY LIFE ON THIS DESERT ISLE. NOT A TREE... NOT A PLANT... NOT A BLADE OF GRASS GROW ON THIS BARREN CORAL ROCK. IT WAS FIVE ACRES OF A DETHRONED...



FOR A LONG TIME, ERIC LAY IN THE BLISTERING SUN, EXHAUSTED. THEN, FEELING A TERRIBLE THIRST, HE SOUGHT OUT AND FOUND A SMALL PUDDLE LEFT BY THE STORM IN A SHALLOW DEPRESSION ON TOP OF A CORAL ROCK. HE DRANK NEEDLESS...



WHEN HE HAD SLAKED HIS THIRST, ERIC LOOKED UP SUDDENLY, SENSING THAT HE WAS BEING WATCHED. HE STARTED, HIS THROAT CHOKED WITH A RISING SORRY. THE GREAT GREY SHIP'S RAT WAS WATCHING HIM WITH ITS BEAUTY GLITTERING EYES...



ERIC BACKED AWAY. THE RAT SCURRIED FORWARD TO THE TINY POOL AND DRANK. ERIC'S FACE WENT WET WITH DISGUST...



THE CASTAWAYS... THE MAN AND THE RAT... KEPT SOME DISTANCE APART. AND YET, THEY SHARED A COMMON LONELINESS. EACH FOUND AT LEAST A LITTLE COMFORT IN SEEING THE OTHER NEAR...



THOROUGHLY EXHAUSTED, BOTH SPENT THE NIGHT THROUGH. IT WASN'T UNTIL THEY AWOKE THE FOLLOWING MORNING THAT THEY FELT THE FIRST SHARP PANGS OF HUNGER. ERIC SEARCHED THE ENTIRE BEACH...



THE RAT, TOO, SNIFDED EVERY INCH OF THE ISLAND BUT FOUND NOTHING TO SATISFY ITS GROWING APPETITE. SOON, THE MAN AND THE RAT FACED EACH OTHER WITH A DIFFERENT LOOK IN THEIR EYES, A HUNGRY LOOK...



IN THE BRIGHT MOONLIGHT THAT BATHED THE ISLAND, ERIC SAW THE RAT, TEN FEET AWAY... STARING AT HIM. STARING BREEDILY, HE SHOCKED...



THE DUSK-GREY ROBOTT DREW BACK ITS LIFE IN A FIERCE SNARL. THE GASTRONAUT SHAMAN HURLED A HANDFUL OF SAND AT IT...



THE NEXT MORNING ERIC SAW HIS SOLE LIVING COMPANION SLUTTING ITSELF ON DRY SEAWeed THAT HAD BEEN WASHED ABOARD. THE SHAMAN SWALLOWED A MOUTHFUL, THEN, HE AND THE RAT INCONCERNED THE FOAL NESS AT THE SAME TIME...



THAT DAY, HUNGER SHAKED AT THE SURVIVORS' INNARDS, AND WHEN NIGHT CAME AGAIN, ERIC SLEPT RESTLESSLY. SUDDENLY, HE SAT UP WITH A START...



THE RAT FLED. ERIC SLEPT NO MORE THAT NIGHT AND HIS VIGILANCE WAS REWARDED. SEVERAL TIMES THE RAT CAME CLOSE.

HAVE A CARE! MY SWEATIN' LITTLE FRIEND... BY TOMORROW, I MAY BE LESS PARTICULAR WHAT I EAT MYSELF...



ERIC'S MOUTH AND THROAT WERE DRIER THAN EVER NOW. HIS LIPS WERE FOLCHED AND CRACKED, HIS HUNGER PAINED HIM. IT WAS LATER THAT SAME MORNING THAT SEVERAL OUT-RIGGER BOATS APPEARED OFFSHORE, MANNED BY NATIVES FISHING WITH NETS. ERIC SHOUTED HOARSELY AT THEM AND WAVED HIS ARMS.



THERE WAS A SUDDEN FLURRY OF EXCITEMENT AMONG THE NATIVE FISHERMEN... MUCH CHATTERING AND POINTING AT THE LONELY FIGURE ON THE BEACH...



WITH HORROR IN THEIR EYES FOR "THE ISLAND DEVIL" THEY FEVERISHLY RAULED IN THEIR BETS...



...AND PADDLED SHIFTLY AWAY, LEAVING ERIC WITH NOTHING BEFORE HIM BUT THE BROAD EXPANSE OF TORQUISE SEA. NUMB WITH DISAPPOINTMENT, HE RAN TO THE SAND...



FINALLY, HIS THIRST COMPELLING HIM, ERIC CRAWLED BACK TO THE CORAL ROCK TO DRINK FROM THE TINY POOL, NO LONGER CARING THAT THE RAT HAD DRUNK THERE TOO...



THE RAT, TOO, CAME TO INVESTIGATE THE DRIED-UP DEPRESSION. ERIC HURLED A ROCK AT IT... ANGRILY... DESPERATELY. HE MISSED...



TOO WEAK TO PURSUE HIS PREY, ERIC STOOD CROAKING AFTER THE RAT AS IT CRAWLED AWAY...



THAT AFTERNOON, A SMALL SEA-BIRD SCARRED OVERHEAD, DROPPING A FISH FROM ITS BEAK. AS THE BIRD SWOOPED TO RECOVER ITS PRIZE, ERIC FLUNG A ROCK AT IT WITH ALL OF HIS REMAINING STRENGTH...



THEN, ERIC SLUMPED WEAKLY TO THE HOT WHITE SAND...

THE BIRD LAY DEAD NEAR THE WATER'S EDGE WITH ITS HALF-SWALLOWED MORSEL. ERIC SUFFERED A PLEASUREABLE AGONY AS HE INCHED TOWARD HIS WAITING MEAL.



BUT THE OTHER CASTAWAY SAW THIS PLUMP FEATHERED PRIDE AND, DRIVEN BY THE HUNGRY PAINS OF HUNGER IN ITS BELLY, THE RAT, TOO, CRANCHED WEAKLY TOWARD THE FALLEN GULL...



NOW ERIC SAW THE RAT, AND THE RAT SAW ERIC. EACH RESTRAINED MOVEMENT BENEATH THAT FLESH-ROASTING SUN WAS A TORMENT FOR BOTH CREATURES. THE MAN, THE RAT... AND ERIC WENT TO SEE HIS BRIZZLED RIVAL MOVE, AHEAD OF HIM.



THE RAT WAS THERE NOW, NOT TAKING THE TIME TO SHIFT OR TEAR AT ITS FOOD, BUT GULPING AT THE BIRD, SWALLOWING IT WHOLE...



AND AT THE SAME TIME, ERIC HAD CLOSED THE GAP SO THAT THERE WAS BUT A SHORT HAIR BETWEEN THEM. WITH ENORMOUS EFFORT, ERIC RAISED HIMSELF, THEN FELL FORWARD, TRYING TO CATCH HIS ENEMY.



FINDING STRENGTH IN FEAR, THE RAT LEAPED ASIDE, SO THAT ERIC'S FINGERS JUST BRUSHED ITS SHORT-HAIRED GUNNY FUR...



FOR A LONG TIME THE MAN AND THE RAT LAY PRONE ON THE STEAMING SAND, EACH STUDING THE OTHER'S EYES, AND THEN ERIC SCREAMED...

"IT'S YOU OR ME! I GET NOW, NOW... OR
YOU'LL WAIT TILL I'M TOO WEAK TO MOVE!"



THE FAMISHED BEASTMAN STRUGGLED TO HIS KNEES, PERVERSELY HE SLOW CREEPING PURPLE. THE RAT BACKED AWAY WEAKLY...

"THEN YOU'LL EAT OUT MY EYEBALLS AND
THE FLESH OFF MY FACE! YOU'LL EAT
SLOW SO I'LL LAST..."



THERE WAS NO TIME FOR THE RAT TO SWALLOW. IT'S STILL ARMED. LEAVING THE THREE-FINGERED MARSH IN THE HOT SAND, IT DIPPED SLOWLY INTO THE SEA...

"WELL, IT'S NOT GONNA BE ME!
IT'S GONNA BE YOU!"



THE RAT TURNED IN THE WATER, NOT GIVING UP ITS PREY, AND STARTED SWIMMING FROM THE ISLAND. ERIC, DRAINED INTO THE WATER AFTER IT, SWIMMING WITH LIMPLY CHURNING ARMS...



Greedily holding its bulging mouthful, THE RAT LOST BREATH... SWALLOWED WATER THROUGH ITS MOUTH... BEGAN TO SINK. THE MAN REACHED OUT AND SAVED THE DROWNING RAT...



...SAVED IT FOR HIMSELF! HEAR MAD WITH HUNGER, NOT WAITING TO RETURN TO SHORE WITH HIS STRANGLED PRIZE, THE MAN STUFFED THE WATER-IMBOLATED RAT INTO HIS MOUTH, THIR FIST...



AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A SLEEK BLACK FISH CUT ITS WAY THROUGH THE BLUE, SLISING SWIFTLY AND SILENTLY TOWARD ITS FLOATING HUMAN QUARRY...



THE GREAT HUNGRY SHARK CLOSED IN WITH HUGE JAWS ASAPE, THE DOUBLE ROW OF RIBBON TEETH READY AND EAGER TO TEAR. IT CAME UP BEHIND ERIC...



A. VIOLENT TURBULENCE FOLLOWED... A THRASHING AND A SPLASHING OF FOAM AND SPLASHES... THE NATIVE OUTRIGGERS APPEARED THEN, GRANNY ARMS RHYTHMICALLY THRESHING PRODUCED...



THEY'D RETURNED WITH THEIR CHIEF TO WORSHIP THE ISLAND GOD. INSTEAD, THEY SAW THE VICIOUS TIGER OF THE SEA, THE POWERFUL POLYRESIAN BRAHMIN UP SHORT, SHARP SAFFS. ONE NATIVE KHELT, HIS SPEAR POSED... THEM LET IT FLY...



HE STRUCK THE BRUTE SQUARELY UNDER THE SPINE, THERE FOLLOWED A FURIOUS THRASHING AS THE OTHERS HOOED THEIR GATES INTO THE WOUNDED KILLER SHARK AND HOEVED IT ONBOARD AND STOOD, GARNED



...BURNING AT THE STILL, DEAD SENZEN OF THE DEEP, FOR STICKING OUT OF ITS TOOTH-LINED MOUTH WAS THE UNSHALLOWED HEAD OF ERIC HALFORD... AND OUT OF ERIC'S MOUTH, THE HEAD OF THE EASY-EYED JAF... AND OUT OF THE JAF'S MOUTH, THE HEAD OF HEAD... AND OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE SHARK, PROTRUDING THE HEAD OF THE TINY FISH...



HOL, HEM! SO ANGOT OF THEM QUITE FINISHED THEIR MEAL, EH, KODDIE? WELL, LEARN A LESSON FROM THIS LITTLE SORCERAN-STORY! NEVER BITE OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN SWALLOW! SOMEBODY MIGHT GET AWAYD OF YOU. AND NOW THAT THE PETRIFYING PAGE HAS BEEN SET, THE KULT-KEEPER AWAITs WITH HIS TEEP-TAP... A NIGHTMARIsh TALE OF MARSHAL MURDER. ITLL GIVE YOU LATER WITH ANOTHER GRAVE TALE OF TERROR, TILL THEN, LET ME LEAVE YOU WITH THIS WORDS TO THOUGHT. DON'T COUNT YOUR CHOCOS UNTIL THEY'RE MATURED! -THE KODIE



E.C. WENT TO SEA IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER NEW TREND...



AND WE CAME UP WITH...
SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND...

PIRACY

NOW YOU SEARCH
FOR IT!

BUT IF YOU CAN'T FIND **PIRACY**
AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND, YOU
CAN **SUBSCRIBE!** JUST FILL OUT
THE COUPON AND MAIL, TOGETHER
WITH **ONE HUNDRED PIECES OF
CENT** (THAT'S ONE BUCK, LAND-
LUBBERS!), TO:

THE SEASIDE EDITORS OF
PIRACY
ROOM 106
223 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 10, N.Y.

OKAY, BILGE RATS! YOU SHANGHAIED ME!
I ENCLOSE \$1.00 FOR THE NEXT EIGHT ISSUES
OF **PIRACY!**

NAME

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CITY

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HERE'S A DELIGHTFUL SAMPLE
OF ESCAPE LITERATURE CALLED...

THE SUBSTITUTE



FOR SEVEN LONG YEARS, HENRI DUVAL HAD SUFFERED THE EQUATORIAL HEAT AND THE BLAZING SUN AND THE TORTURED LABORS OF THE FRENCH PENAL COLONY... AND ALL BECAUSE HE MURDERED THE HUSBAND OF THE WOMAN HE'S LOVED. FOR SEVEN LONG YEARS, HE SWEATED AND SLAVED AT THE IMPOSSIBLE TASK OF HACKING CLEARINGS INTO THAT JUNGLE ISLAND, AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK, FOR NO SOONER HAD A TRACT BEEN CLEARED THAN THE RELENTLESS TROPICAL OVERGROWTH CLOSED IN AGAIN LIKE A GREEN TIDE. BUT THIS WAS THE PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER AND HENRI WAS FORCED TO URGED IN ITS MIRRS, LEFT ONLY TO DREAM OF COOL PARAS AND COOL WINE AND THE COOL LIPS OF A WOMAN. AND THEN, ONE DAY, HE DISCOVERED THE HERB...

"SACRE DIOS! IT IS MELLBORE!"



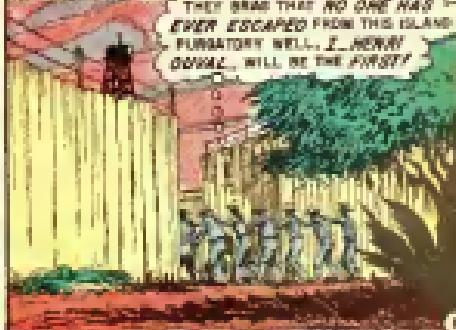
HENRI WAS AN EXPERT ON POISONS, AND HE KNEW MELLBORE... THE HERB WITH THE ROOT STOCK THAT YIELDED THE POISONOUS SUCROSIDE. ATTELEKOUWAH HE IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED THE PLANT AND TORN IT FROM THE SPINDY JUNGLE FLOOR, STUFFING THE SHORT ROOTS INTO HIS BLOUSE...

"HEY, YOU! DON'T KEEP THAT MACHETE GOING!"



WHEN THE BLAZING EQUATORIAL SUN HAD SUNK INTO THE WESTERN SKY AND THE EXHAUSTED MUGNAULED PRISONERS HAD BEEN MARCHED BACK INTO THE PENAL COLONY COMPOUND, HENRI DUVAL HAD MADE HIS PLANS...

THEY SAID THAT NO ONE HAS EVER ESCAPED FROM THIS ISLAND PURGATORY WELL, I, HENRY DUVAL, WILL BE THE FIRST!"



HERE HE HAD THE HELLBLOWE ROOTS IN HIS CRAMPING MATTRESS, AND THE NEXT DAY BEGAN TO GATHER THE THINGS HE NEEDED. WHEN THE CLEARING CREWS WERE AGAIN MARCHED OUT INTO THE STEAMING JUNGLE, HE CHOSE JUST THE RIGHT SIZE BAMBOO STALK.



CAREFULLY HE GATHERED JUST THE RIGHT SHAPE PALM FRONDS...



...AND WHEN THE GUARDS WEREN'T LOOKING, HE MADE JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF CORN BARK...



HERE HE HAD IN HIS SHIRT, AND THAT EVENING, SUCCESSFULLY SMUGGLED THEM INTO THE COMPOUND. LATE THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE OTHER PRISONERS WERE ASLEEP, HENRI WORKED. WITH THE SHAPES HE'D STOLEN FROM THE MEET HALL, HE CAREFULLY CARVED THE CHURN OF CORN BARK INTO A SMOOTH, ROUND, TEARDROP SHAPE.



SLITTING THE SMOOTHED EDGE, HE INSERTED THE CORRECTLY SHAPED PALM FRONDS, TRIMMING THEM DOWN...



NEST, INTO THE BULBOUS END OF THE CORN TEARDROP, HE INSERTED THE NEEDLE HE'D TAKEN FROM A FELLOW PRISONER'S BOWIE KIT...



...AND... FINALLY... HENRI HAD FINISHED AN ACCURATE DART... A DART THAT WOULD BE POISONED.



...AND BLOWN THROUGH THE HIGH-LOW BAMBOO STALK HE'D CUT...



ALL THAT NIGHT, HENRY PRACTISED WITH HIS BLOW-
PIPE UNTIL HIS AIM WAS DEADLY...



FINALLY, HE HAD HIS MURDEROUS WEAPON, ALONG WITH THE
HELIBORE ROOTS, IN HIS HOT TUBES... AND LAY DOWN FOR
THE FEW HOURS OF SLEEP LEFT TO HIM...



THE NEXT DAY RONI FOUND TWO
FLINT ROCKS AND SHARDED THEM
BACK INTO THE COMPOUND AS HE
HAD DONE WITH THE OTHER THINGS...



THAT NIGHT, HE BROKE DOWN
THE HELIBORE ROOTS, CARE-
FULLY CATCHING THE JUICE THAT
RAN FROM THE PULVERIZED MEAT
IN A TIN CUP...



THEN HE DIPPED HIS DART-NEEDLE
INTO THE HIGHLY TOXIC POISON



AND THE NEXT MORNING, AS THE GOVERNOR OF THE
PENAL COLONY STRODE ACROSS THE COMPOUND'S
GROUNDS ON HIS DAILY CONSTITUTIONAL, HENRY TOOK
CAREFUL AIM...



... AND LET FLY HIS LETHAL MISSILE...



BY NINON DALL, THE GOVERNOR WAS DEAD...



... AND A POOR UNFORTUNATE PRISONER, IN WHOSE MARTRESS THE BLOW-SUN WAS FOUND, WAS WHIPPED TO DEATH - VAINLY PROTESTING HIS INNOCENCE TO THE LAST...



HENRY, ALONG WITH TWO OTHER PRISONERS, WAS LUCKILY ASSIGNED THE JOB OF BUILDING THE COFFIN IN WHICH THE DEMISED GOVERNOR'S BODY WOULD BE KEPT UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE MORTALY BOAT FROM THE CONTINENT.



THE GOVERNOR HAD BEEN A FAMOUS FRENCH NAVAL HERO. HENRY HAD PLANNED IT ALL! HE'D KNOWN THAT THE GOVERNOR'S BODY WOULD BE SHIPPED BACK TO FRANCE. HE'D COUNTED ON IT. THIS WAS HENRY DUVALL'S FLOT! THIS WAS THE MEANS FOR HIS ESCAPE...

AIR HOLES! BY GOD, HENRY THE CURSED DIAF IS DEAD! WHY DOES HE NEED AIR HOLES IN HIS COFFIN?

TO ALLOW FOR EXPANDING GASES, FOR GOD'S SAKE!



THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MONTHLY STEAMERS EXPECTED ARRIVAL, HENRY SLIPPED FROM HIS BARRACKS AND HURRIED TO THE CHAPEL, WHERE THE GOVERNOR'S BODY LAY IN STATE IN THE COKE COFFIN.



HE STRIPPED THE BODY OF ITS CLOTHES AND DRESSED IT IN HIS GRIMY PRISON UNIFORM...



THEN HE BLASHER AND HACKED THE FACE UNTIL IT WAS UNRECOGNIZABLE.



IN THE MORNING THEY WOULD FIND THE BODY AND THINK THAT AN *ARMY* OF *HEAVY DUTY*'S HAD *ATTACKED* AND *MURDERED* HIM DURING THE NIGHT. HENRI CARRIED THE DISFIGURED COFFIN INTO THE BARRACKS AND PLACED IT OUTSIDE ON HIS CITY...



...AND CLIMBED INTO THE RECENTLY VACATED COFFIN TO WAIT... TO WAIT FOR THEM TO COME AND CARRY HIM TO THE WAITING BOAT AND EVENTUAL FREEDOM...



AT FIRST HENRI WAS TERRIFIED... BUT THEN HE CALMED DOWN AS HE REALIZED...

HENRI: WHEN I GET TO FRANCE, I WILL CERTAINLY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FREE MYSELF!
IT IS NOTHING!



THEN HE TOOK THE *FOOD* HE'D HIDDEN AND THE CAN OF *WATER* AND MURKED BACK ACROSS THE COMPOUND TO THE CHAPEL...



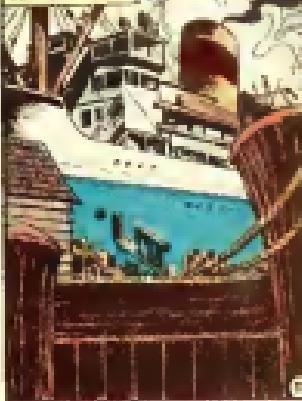
THE NEXT MORNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED, AND SUDDENLY HENRI HEARD POUNDING AND HAMMERING...



HAPPILY, HENRI FELT HIS COFFIN LIFTED AND CARRIED OUT OF THE CHAPEL, ACROSS THE COMPOUND, DOWN TO THE PENAL COLONIAL WHARF...



...AND UP THE GRAPPLING PLANK OF THE SUPPLY SHIP...



HE LISTENED WITH EYES TO THE SQUEAK OF THE LINER'S WHISTLE, THE RUMBLE ROAR OF ITS ENGINES. HE FELT THE SHIP HEAVING AS THE SHIP BACKED OFF FROM THE PIER AND HEADED INTO THE OPEN SEA...



HE CALCULATED THE APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF THE VOTARY AND REALIZED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO PUT HIMSELF ON A STREET RATIONING PROGRAM TO MAKE HIS MEAGER FOOD SUPPLY LAST. IT WAS HOURS LATER BEFORE HE AFFORDED HIMSELF HIS FIRST BOWL, WASHED DOWN BY ONE GULP OF THE TROPIC WATER.



AND THAT NIGHT, THE HUMMING SHIP'S ENGINE LULLED HENRI INTO A PEACEFUL SLEEP.



BUT HE WAS AWAKENED RUDDILY THE NEXT MORNING AS THE COFFIN WAS LIFTED BRUISINGLY AND CARRIED ON DECK...



HE LISTENED AS THE ENGINES STOPPED AND ONLY THE GENTLE CLAPPING OF THE OCEAN WAVES DRIFTED THROUGH THE MASTENED AIR HOLE. AND THEN HE READS THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE, DECREEING...

...AND SO, IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNOR BOLLEGAT'S LAST REQUEST...



HENRI'S BLOOD FROZE IN HIS VEINS AS HE FELT THE COFFIN LIFTED TO THE SHIP'S BAIL AND SLID FORWARD... OVER IT...

WE COMMIT THE COFFIN CONTAINING HIS BODY TO THE DEEP... FOR BURIAL AT SEA...



HENRI'S SCREAM WAS CUT SHORT AS THE COFFIN HIT THE TOSSED SPINE AND WATER POURSED IN THROUGH THE AIR HOLE, FILLING HIS PINE PHARYNX, FILLING HIS BLUE-BERLING MOUTH... FILLING HIS GASPING LUNGS...



A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

THIS IS AN APPEAL FOR ACTION!

THE PROBLEM: Comics are under fire... horror and crime comics in particular. Due to the efforts of various "do-gooders" and "do-goodit" groups, a large segment of the public is being led to believe that certain comic magazines cause juvenile delinquency, warp the minds of America's youth, and effect the development of the personalities of those who read them! Among these "do-gooders" are a psychiatrist who has made a lucrative career of attacking comic magazines, certain publishing companies who do not publish comics and who would benefit by their demise, many groups of adults who would like to blame their lack of ability as responsible parents on comic magi instead of on themselves, and various assorted headlines here and there. These people are nutcases. They complain to local police officials, to local magazine retailers, to local wholesalers, add to their congressional. They complain and complain and threaten and threaten. Basically, everyone gets frightened. The newsletter gets frightened. He removes the books from display. The wholesaler gets frightened. He refuses shipment. The congressmen get frightened. November is coming! They start an investigation. The wave of hysteria has seriously threatened the very existence of the whole comic magazine industry.

WE BELIEVE: Your editor sincerely believes that the claim of these crusaders... that comics are bad for children... is nonsense. If we, in the slightest way, thought that horror comics, crime comics, or any other kind of comics were harmful to our readers, we would cease publishing them and direct our efforts toward something else!

And we're not alone in our belief. For example: Dr. David Abrahamson, eminent criminologist, in his book, "Who Are The Guilty?" says, "Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been widely blamed for it... to my experience as a physician, I cannot remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime, or who became neurotic or psychotic... because he or she read comic books." A group led by Dr. Freda Kehn, Mental Health Chairman of the Illinois Congress of the P. T. A., decided that living comic violence has a decided beneficial effect on young minds! Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that horror comic books do not originate criminal behavior in children... in a way, the horror comics may do some good... children may use fantasy, as stimulated by the "comics" as a means of working out natural feelings of aggression.

We also believe that a large portion of our total readership of horror and crime comics is made up of adults. We believe that those who oppose comics are a small minority. Yet this minority is causing the hysteria. The voice of the majority... you who buy comics, read them, enjoy them, and are not harmed by them... has not been heard!

WHAT YOU MUST DO: Unless you act now, the pressure from this minority may force comics from the American scene. It is members of this minority who threaten the local retailers, who threaten the local wholesalers, who have sent letters to the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (now investigating the comic industry).

IT IS TIME THAT THE MAJORITY'S VOICE BE HEARD!

It is time that the Senate Subcommittee hear from **YOU**... well and every one of you!

If you agree that comics are harmless entertainment, write a letter or a postcard **TODAY** to:

The Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

and in your own words, tell them so. Make it a nice, polite letter! In the case of you younger readers, it would be more effective if you could get your parents to write for you, or perhaps add a P.S. to your letter, as the Senate Subcommittee may not have much respect for the opinions of minors.

Of course, if you or your parents disagree with us, and believe that comics ARE bad, let your sentiments be known on that too! The important thing is that the Subcommittee hear from actual comic book readers and/or their parents, rather than from people who never read a comic magazine in their lives, but simply want to destroy them.

It is also important that your local newsletter be encouraged to circulate carrying, displaying, and selling all kinds of comics. Speak to him. Have him speak to his wholesaler.

Whatever you can, let your voice and the voices of your parents be raised in protest over the campaign against comics.

But first... right now... please write that letter to the Senate Subcommittee.

Sincerely,
Your grateful editor
(for the whole E. C. Gzug)

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SQUEEZE PLAY

From the place where he crouched on the metal ladder leading down into the open manhole, Ben Flint's eyes were exactly level with the surface of the street. Gripping the steel rails, Flint leaned forward to scan the paving crew hard at work nearby, spreading hot tar over the road bed. *He'll be here in a minute, Flint thought to himself, his stomach muscles tightening with nervous expectation. As soon as the lousy rat rolls up I'm gonna let 'im have it right between the eyes!*

Steam boiled up from the hot tar, while the workmen spread it swiftly . . . Flint's eyes narrowed to keep the top of the steep road in sight. A rumbling noise was heard off in the distance: Flint's right hand tightened spasmodically on the gun held at his side. *That must be the steamroller coming down the hill, Flint mused, his pulse quickening. Soon as these guys get outa the way and the roller comes this way, Fletcher is a dead man!*

At the top of the hill, now, the bulky metal monster came into view, its ponderous roller squashing flat the bubbling hot tar in its path. With gathering speed it moved down the hill, while the workers scrambled out of its path. Flint's gun-arm moved nervously across his face, to clear his vision, while he clung to the guard rail with his other hand . . . his eyes narrowed as he peered closely at the man perched on the seat of the steamroller. The red hair and the square-jawed face of the driver were fully in view . . . it was *Fletcher*, all right!

The huge steamroller was thirty yards

from him . . . the street workers had moved out of sight, back to the boiling tar cauldron. Flint raised his bead slightly, the gun slid upward so that its sight was trained squarely on the driver of the immense juggernaut. Flint slowly counted to three, then he squeezed the trigger.

There was no sound; the silencer had done its work. Thirty yards away the body of the driver slumped forward, the man's head sagging lifelessly on his shoulders. Flint started to descend back into the open manhole, his lips apart in a grimace of triumph. He heard, suddenly, the sound of sewer workers below . . . there were other men down there, coming closer! Men who might testify that he had been attempting to flee from the scene of a murder!

With a gasp of surprise, aware that his plan of escape had been thwarted, Flint leaped up the remaining steps and landed on the hot oozy street surface. Trying desperately to move his feet through the clinging tar, Flint turned and saw the enormous steamroller hurtling towards him.

He screamed just once, then the awful weight of the roller was crashing over his body . . . mashing him into a hideous blob of tortured, squirming, tar-covered flesh. His blood sprayed out like soup from a punctured can; Flint was shattered beyond recognition by the time the driverless roller had crashed into a stone wall at the bottom of the hill, and came to a stop amidst the mournful wail of steam escaping from the mangled boiler.

HERE'S A CRAZY, MIXED-UP
FRIGHTMARE I CALL . . .

MURDER DREAM

I WANDERED ABOUT THE LONELY
LONDON STREETS TONIGHT, CHILLED
TO THE MARROW OF MY BONES BY
THE DENSE, DARK, CHOKING FOUL . . .

I WAS MORE TIRED THAN I'VE
EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE, YET
I FEARED SLEEP. I
FEARED THE DREAMS
SOMewhere IN THE VAST,
GREEDILY BURROWED, BIG BEN
TOLLED MIDNIGHT . . .

AT LAST . . . TOO EX-
HAUSTED TO STAND . . .
MY EYES SIGHTLESS . . .
BEDDING FOR REST . . .
I RETURNED TO MY
BLEAK HOTEL ROOM . . .

UNDRESSED,
LEAVING MY CLOTHES
WHERE THEY FELL . . .



... AND SINKED UPON THE
BED . . .

SLEEP CAME AT ONCE . . . AND THEN THE
DREAM . . . THE DREAD DREAM I'VE HAD
FOR THE PAST THREE NIGHTS COMES
AGAIN . . . AND I AM POWERLESS TO STOP
IT . . .



I AM APPROACHING OUR COTTAGE . . .
BASIC IN FAIR. I AM RETURNING
FROM LONDON, MY RUSTIC PARKED OFF
THE ROAD. IT'S ALL SO CLEAR. THE
THE SOUND IS SO CLEAR. THE
THE SOUND OF GATHY SCREAM-
ING . . .



HOWARD! HELP ME!
AAAAAAHHHHH

I HEAR IT SO CLEARLY... CATHY'S
TERRIFIED HEART-BREAKING SCREAM.
I'M ARRIVING NOW... REACHING OUT
TOWARD THE DOOR. I'M CLOSER TO
IT THAN I HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST
TWO NIGHTS...

I'M COMING, CATHY



But I can't reach it...
AKAEN WITH HER NAME ON MY LIPS,
MY BLOODLTHES DRENCHED WITH
COLD SWEAT... I BURST MY FACE IN MY
HANDS, SOBBING ALONE...

CATHY! WHAT IS IT CATHY?
WHAT AM I DREAMING THIS?
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



I TRY TO DRIVE THE DREAM FROM MY
MIND. I LIE BACK AND THINK OF THE
COTTAGE AND THAT FIRST DAY CATHY
LADIED HERSELF UPON ME... STANDING
QUIET AND STILL ON THAT CLEAR, WIND-
SWEPT MOOR SOME EIGHT MILES
NORTH OF LONDON...

OR HOWEVER IT'S JUST
WHAT I'VE ALWAYS
WANTED!

IT IS
QUANT!



HOW I LOVED HER, MY CATHY! HOW I LOVE HER
STILL! I REMEMBER THE KNOCKING ON THE COTTAGE
DOOR... THE SQUEAK OF CHAISESPRINGS INSIDE... THE SLOW
PAS OF BOOTS ON CARPETED FLOOR... THE SHABBY
DRESSED MAN PEERING OUT... HIS STARING EYES...

WE SAW THE "FOR SALE" SIGN,
MAY WE LOOK AT THE PLACE?
MY NAME'S HOWARD LEBRONTON
THIS IS MY WIFE CATHY!



IT WAS A COZY HOUSE, JEWELINELY NEGLECTED, BUT
CATHY WAS EXTRABILLED WITH IT...

IT'S CHARMING, HOWARD...
YOU JUST WAIT TILL I PUT
MY OWN LITTLE TOUCHES
ABOUT!

I DON'T SUPPOSE
THERE'LL BE ANY
POINT TRYING TO
DISCOURSE YOU, DEAR,
SO HOW THE QUES-
TION IS, CAN WE
AFFORD IT...



I REMEMBER HIS EYES BORING INTO MINE AS WE
DISCUSSED PRICE...

SEVEN HUNDRED QUID
THE FURNITURE GOES WITH THE
HOUSE. CLAUDE BATTLES
I GO WITH THE HOUSE, TOO.

OR, THEN YOU
MUST BE THE CARE-
TAKER. I'M NOT AT
ALL SURE I CAN
AFFORD YOU,
ORTMESS!



ONLY EIGHT QUID A
WEEK... FOR TOBACCO,
MISTER. I SLEEP OVER
THE STABLE!

I DON'T
KNOW...

THAT'S LITTLE
ENOUGH, HOWARD,
AND I WON'T HAVE
TO BE HERE ALONE
WHEN YOU GO TO
LONDON ON BUSINESS.



EVEN AS MY THOUGHTS RAMBLE ON
THROUGH THESE MEMORIES, DAWN
NEVER RACES MY WAY TO DAWN. AND SO
I RISE, TOO WORN AND HAGGARD TO
TEND TO THE BUSINESS THAT BROUGHT
ME TO LONDON...



THE DAY RACES TOO QUICKLY AND IT IS
NIGHT ONCE MORE. I AM IN BED AGAIN
WAITING... WAITING FOR SLEEP TO
COME AND THAT AWFUL, AWFUL
DREAM...

PERHAPS IF I START THINKING OF
THOSE FIRST DAYS WITH CATHY
IN THE COTTAGE, I WON'T HAVE
TO SUFFER THAT HORROROUS
DREAM AGAIN...



CATHY DOODLES WITH THE
PLAQUE, FIXING IT UP. HER HANDS
WORK WITH PASSION WITH THE DECORATING
THE FLOWER GARDEN. THEN, ONE
DAY, THE LETTER CAME...

IT'S A GREAT
OPPORTUNITY,
DEAR... BUT I'LL
HAVE LEAVING
YOU ALONE.

GRANDMOTHER
WILL LOOK AFTER
ME. HOWARD
REACHES LONDON
IN ONLY THREE
HOURS ANYWAY...



CATHY LOOKED SO BEAUTIFUL, SO HAPPY, AS SHE
SAID GOODBYE FROM THE GARDEN. I FELT
I LOVED HER MORE AND MORE WITH EACH
PASSING DAY...



AWAKENESS GIVES WAY TO SLEEP. MEMORY DRIFTS INTO DREAM...
THAT HORRIBLE DREAM AGAIN. I HEAR HER SCREAMING... CATHY'S
SCREAMING FROM THE COTTAGE. I'M THERE AGAIN... RACING
TOWARD THE DOOR... CLOSER NOW... CLOSER... YET NEVER
SEEM TO BE ABLE TO REACH IT...



THE SCREAM ECHOES OVER THE GRIM DARK MOOR
ABORNING... ENDING. MY POOR, TERRIFIED SCREAMING
CATHY. LORD, HOW I LOVE HER. WITH SUPER-
HUMAN EFFORT, I MURK MYSELF AGAINST THE DOOR...
TWIST THE KNOB... HEAVE MY WEIGHT AGAINST IT...



FOR AN INTERMINABLE MOMENT, I AM TORTURED... FRUSTRATED... UNABLE TO BRING MY DREAM-VISION BEYOND THAT
POINT. TIME AND MOTION ARE SUSPENDED. I'M BETWEEN
WAKEFULNESS AND SLEEP. I MUST KNOW! I FLING WIDE
THE DOOR... AND BEHOLD A NIGHT MORE HORRIFIC THAN
THOSE EVER IN MY WILDEST NIGHTMARES, IMAGINED...



THE SCREAM RAGES. THE DREAM VANISHES. I AM AWAKE, SITTING UPRIGHT, GLARING AT MY FACE, TRYING TO FORCE THE FRIGHT INTO MY MIND...



SUDDENLY I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO. THE DREAM IS AN OAK... A BARRIER. I LEAP FROM BED, FUMBLE FOR THE LAMP SWITCH...



BUT MY HAND FALLS ASLEEP. I SLUMP BACK ONTO THE BED. I REACH FOR MY CIGARETTE IN THE DARKNESS... LIGHT ONE... DRAG DEEPLY... SLEEP ON...



I LIE THERE UNTIL THE CIGARETTE BURNS DOWN AND I CRUSH IT OUT. I AM DETERMINED TO STAY AWAKE BUT MY EYES ARE UNBEARABLY HEAVY. SLEEP REACHES OUT AND SMOTHERS ME IN ITS VELVET GRIP. THE SCREAM ERUPTS TO GREET ME...



I'M INSIDE THE COTTAGE NOW... DASHING FORWARD, I CATCH ON HER KNEES... HER FACE DISTORTED WITH FRIGHT... HER EYES GLAZED IN TERROR... PLEADING WITH ME TO SAVE HER... AND BETWEE, HIS CLAWING HER HAIR, THAT MANIACAL LOOK IN HIS EYES, IS STANDING OVER HER, AN AX FOURED...



HE SEES ME THEN, AND LETS CATHY GO. I DIVE AT HIM, ARMED FOR THE AX...

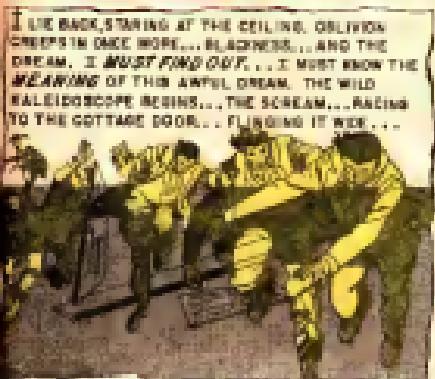


...BUT HIS INHUMAN'S STRENGTH SENDS ME SPINNING ACROSS THE ROOM...



THEN WE COME AT ME, THE AX HELD HIGH, HIGH...





THEN, SUDDENLY, I AM AWAKE AGAIN. FRANTICALLY, I DRESS... PAY... CHECK OUT OF THE HOTEL... AND SOON THE MILES ARE FLYING BY BENEATH THE WHEELS OF MY AUSTIN...

I'VE GOT TO SEE... I'VE GOT TO SEE MY CATHY... MAKE SURE SHE'S ALL RIGHT!

THE SHADOWS OF DAWN DESCEND SILENTLY FROM THE GREY SKY, MEET NEAR THE SHORE, BLACK AND BY FEEDING WHISPERS OF WIND. THE FOG FLOATS LOW AND WRAITHLIKE ABOUT THE COTTAGE AS I QUIT THE CAR AND PUSH IN. CATHY IS THERE... AND JUST AS IN MY DREAM... SHE SITS BEHIND A COFFIN... SIZZLING...



AND HOWARD LEIGHTON IS IN THE COFFIN... CATHY...

CHORE... YOU IT?



I STAGGER TOWARD HER WITH FALTERING, JERKY STEPS. HER FACE IS TAUT WITH TERROR, HER HUSBAND... CATHY'S HOWARD... LIES DEAD... AND I KNOW...



KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY FROM ME!

I KNOW THAT I HAVE DREAMED A MARRIOR'S DREAM. I KNOW THAT I AM CLAUDE BAYFORD, AND AS THE SCREAMING BEGINS AGAIN AND I HOLD CATHY'S HAIR IN MY STRONG CLAWING HANDS, BUT AS FORCED, I KNOW... OH, LORD... THAT I CAN'T STOP MYSELF... THAT I'VE COME BACK TO THE COTTAGE TO MURDER CATHY LEIGHTON JUST AS I MURDERED HER HUSBAND.



YOU SEE, MOTHER, HOWARD LEIGHTON COULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN LONDON... BECAUSE CLAUDE BAYFORD HAD ALREADY GIVEN HIM THE BOBBINNESS! CLAUDE ISHOT THAT HE WAS... JUST INNOCENT! HE WAS HOWARD'S WISHFUL THINKING, YOU MIGHT SAY. THE MINUTE CLAUDE SAW CATHY, HE WENT OUT OF HIS MIND OVER HER. WELL, CLAUDE WANTS WITH HIS PEEP-POT TO DRIVE PEG OUT OF YOUR MIND...

...WITH ANOTHER OF HER REEKING RECKERS, SO I'LL SAY "BYE" FOR THIS ISSUE OF MY MURKED MURK MAG.

THE END



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE HEE! HI, MIRROR MIRROR! THIS IS YOUR SHAKER CHEF READY WITH ANOTHER MEAL OF MOLLY HORRORITY FROM MY CRACKY CAULDRON. IF YOU'L JUST SLICE MY ON THE BODGE... INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR... THE OLD WITCH, YOUR MISTRESS IN HEAPING HELPINGS OF FOG, FARE... WILL WIND UP S.H.'S MUG OF MUG IN MY USUAL GORY-TELLING MANNER WITH A DELIGHTFUL DISH OF DELIRIUM DELIVINGS CALLED...

The Switch

THE COLD MORNING LIGHT PRESSED UP AGAINST THE FIRE-PANCO'S DARK ARCHED WINDOW, ROTUSHED ENTRANCE BY THE HEAVILY LINED EXPENSIVE BARRIER CARRIERS. INTIMIDATED DEEP IN A HEAVY LEATHER CHAIR THAT HIS AGED BODY HARSHLY NARMS, WEALTHY CARLTON WHORSTIER SLOWLY STIRRED HIMSELF. HIS WRINKLED FACE CRACKED EVEN MORE WITH A PREFERENCE-SMILE AND HIS LYMPHATIC BLUE EYES HELD SOME Distant DREAM AS HE REACHED FOR THE BELLCORD BESIDE THE ORNATE FIREPLACE...



BEFORE LONG, A SLEEPY-EYED BUTLER SHUFFLED INTO THE DEN...



FULTON'S EYES OPENED WIDE AT THIS STARTLING NEWS, AND HE LIT A DESKLAMP IN ORDER TO SEE HIS EMPLOYEE'S FACE. PERHAPS IT WAS SOME KIND OF JOKE...



THE DECEP'TIVE MILLIONAIRE ROSE UNSTEADY. HE PATTED HIS BUTLER'S SHOULDERS...

DON'T WORRY, FULTON! I LOVE HER AND I WANT HER TO MARRY ME VERY MUCH. BUT ONLY IF SHE LOVES ME. NOT MY MONEY. I WANT GENUINE AFFECTION, NOT AN AGF.



THAT NIGHT CARLTON WEBSTER TOOK AN INEXPENSIVE BOUQUET TO LINDA STEWART'S NEAT-PLATE. HER BEAUTIFUL FACE BEAMED GRATEFULLY.



LINDA INVITED CARLTON TO SHARE THE SOFA WITH HER. HE LOOKED LOVINGLY INTO HER GREEN EYES. STUDIED HER SCARLET LIPS. LONGED TO KISS THEM. HE HELD HER HAND AND, WITHOUT INTENDING TO, BLURTED OUT...



THE OLD MAN'S FACE SARRIED. HE PLEASED WITH LINDA...



LINDA'S MIND RACES. HOW COULD SHE AVOID HURTING THIS KIND OLD MAN'S FEELINGS? HOW COULD SHE TELL HIM...

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR, LINDA? WHY CAN'T I BE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

IT'S YOUR FACE, CARLTON, SO OLD... SO WITHERED... SO WRINKLED...



FOR A WHILE, GARTHON SAT IN STONY SILENCE, SLOWLY REFLECTING ON NATURE'S CRUELTY. AT LAST HE ROSE, PUT ON HIS COAT AND WALKED AWAY.



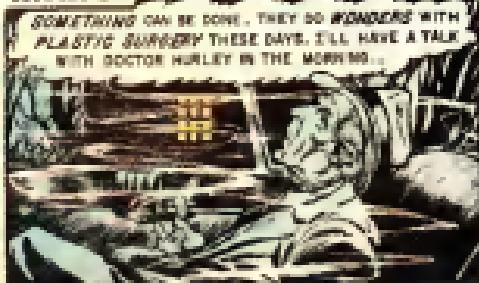
THE NEXT DAY, CARLTON STOPPED IN AT HIS HIGHBROOKS PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE.



WITH SOME DIFFICULTY, CANTON LOCATED THE CURIO STORE HOUSE OF DR. HANS FRIEDNER, A THICK-SET NERVOUS LITTLE MAN WITH PRISM-LINED GLASSES OPENED THE HEAVY DOOR AND PEERED OUT.



THE IMAGINATION THAT HAD EARNED GALTOR WEBSTER A MILLION DOLLARS HAD NOT DESERTED HIM AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS. AS HE RODE HIS CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN CADILLAC BACK TO HIS PALatial ESTATE, HE PUFFED THOUGHTFULLY ON A CIGAR AND SWUNG HIS LEGS IN ITS LUXURIOUS BLUE SEATS.



THE MILLIONAIRE EXPLAINED HIS PRESENTMENT IN DETAIL.
MR. HURLEY SAT WITH HIS FINGERTIPS TOUCHING AND
ASSUMED HIS GRANDEST PROFESSIONAL EXPRESSION. . .



THE HINT OF WEALTH BEGGED TO SATISFY THE STRANGE PHYSICIAN. HE LED HIS VISITOR INTO AN UNION, NOT TO SAY UNSTORABLE CELLAR LABORATORY. HE LISTENED TO CARLTON'S REQUEST. . .



THE ASTRONOMICAL PHILIP SEASIDE CARLTON. HE SAT MOPPIN AND HOW AS DOCTOR PAULMYER EXPLAINED

I TAKE ONLY FIFTY THOUSAND
FOR THE OPERATION, MR. WEBSTER.
THE OTHER ONE HUNDRED AND
FIFTY THOUSAND IS WHAT IT WILL
COST FOR THE
YOUNG MAN'S YOUNG MATE.

POWERS
SILVER
PAUL YOUNG
MURKIN

IF YOU WANT A COMPLETE NEW FACE, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET IT FROM A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN, NOT ME, DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE I'M INSANE, I HAVE DONE THIS OPERATION BEFORE! NOW, THE YOUNG MAN I HAVE IN MIND WILL GO ANYTHING FOR MONEY... A LOT OF MONEY!

THAT NIGHT CARLTON VISITED AND
SPOKE MORE. THEN CAME AWAY RE-
ASSURED THAT SHE WAS WELL WORTH
THE FABULOUS EXPENDITURE. THEN,
HE VISITED THE YOUNG MAN DR.
FALLSIDE WHO HAD RECOMMENDED...

DR. FAULKNER SAID
YOU'D GO ANY PLACE
FOR MONEY & MR.
BOOTH!

A close-up, high-contrast image of a man's face. He has a shocked or intense expression, with wide eyes and a slightly open mouth. He is wearing dark-rimmed glasses and a white, collared shirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

GEORGE BOOTH, THE YOUNG MAN, SAT IN SILENCE FOR A FULL MINUTE AFTER THE OLD MAN HAD GIVEN HIM THE DETAIL.

"A HUNDRED AND FIFTY BRANDS
MAY ALL I WANT TO DO IS GIVE UP
THIS BUSIN' OR MINE! WHAT'S IT
GOTTEN ME UNTRUST IN? I'VE ALWAYS
HAD TO SCRATCH FOR A BUCK! GREAT
WEBSTER, IT'S A DEAL!"

THE NEXT DAY, THE OLD MILLIONAIRE AND THE YOUNG MAN WENT TO DOCTOR BALKIN'S CELLAR LABORATORY. EVERYTHING WAS IN READINESS...TWO OPERATING TABLES...MUCH MEDICAL EQUIPMENT...AND THE NECESSARY CONTINUOUS CHECKS...

TWO WEEKS LATER, DR. PAULSON UNVEILED CARLTON'S NEW FACE.

THE OPERATION IS A
COMPLETE SUCCESS!
HERE! LOOK
WONDERFULLY! YOU'RE A SCENICIST,
SCHOOL! WAIT TILL LINDA SEE ME
NOW!

On our website www.oxfordmaths.com

"OH, BY THE WAY I TOLD GEORGE
BOOTH TO LET ME KNOW IF HE
MOVES. WE SHOULD HAVE HIS NEW
ADDRESS IN CASE WE... ER... MIGHT
NEED HIM AGAIN. . . . END"



CARLTON TURNED TO GO... FRUSTRATED...



AND SO, AGAIN, CARLTON WEBSTER WENT TO SEE DR. FAULHUBER...

OF COURSE I CAN GIVE YOU A NEW BODY, MR. WEBSTER. BUT IT WILL COST YOU SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS!

WHAT? YOU'RE **ARMED**? EVEN I CAN'T AFFORD THAT!

YOU CAN'T EXPECT GEORGE BOOTH TO SET UP HIS BODY FOR LESS THAN HALF A MILLION, MR. WEBSTER

ALL RIGHT! CALL HIM! SEE IF HELL DO IT!



AND SO, AGAIN, THE CELLAR LABORATORY WAS READIED. CARLTON WAS THERE WITH TWO CERTIFIED CHECKS.

THESE TWO OPERATIONS WILL HAVE WASHED OUT MOST OF MY FORTUNE, GENTLEMEN, BUT IT'S WORTH IT! HERE YOU ARE...

READY, GEORGE?

LET'S GET IT OVER WITH, DOCTOR. I'M SOILD AS A ROCK NOW. I DONT PLANS FOR THIS BOOTH.

AND AGAIN, THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS. AFTER A MONTH OF CONVALESCENCE...

WATCH MY STOMACH MUSCLES RIPPLE, DOCTOR. I'M SOILD AS A ROCK NOW. LINDA CAN'T REBUKE ME...

JAN, MR. WEBSTER, BUT IF YOU NEED ME... OR GEORGE... WE'LL BE WAITING.



THAT AFTERNOON, CARLTON TOOK
LINDA TO THE BEACH TO SHOW OFF
HIS STRONG MUSCULAR BODY...



LINDA LEANED TOWARDS CARLTON,
HER MOST LIPS INVITING...



LINDA SHUDDERED AS CARLTON HELD
HER



NO, CARLTON! HOW I CAN'T I WON'T! IT'S... IT'S JUST LOOK AT THOSE
BEDRAGGLED ARMS... AN OLD MAN'S
ARMS, AND YOUR LEGS... SPINDLE-
KNOTTY... FULL OF VARICOSE VEINS...



CARLTON'S HAMMESTINE FACE SHOWED THAT HIS THICK
BRAWNY CHEST BREATHED WITH ANGRY BREATHING...

WHAT DO YOU WANT IN A MAN, I KNOW WHAT I
WANT! NOT THIS SATISFY YOU?
CARLTON, I KNOW YOU'RE...
YOU'RE JUST NOT IT!"



CARLTON STOOD UP, STRETCHING HIS SLENDER ARMS
WITH THEIR SABRETT SKIN... HIS VENEOLO OLD MAN'S
LEGS...



CARLTON LOOKED AT LINDA IN ALL HER BEAUTY AND HE
LENSSED FOR HER, HIS TOUTHFUL BODY BURNING WITH
DESIRE... AND SO, LATER...

ARMS AND LEGS, EH, MR.
WELSTERS GEORGE WILL
WANT TWO HUNDRED
THOUSAND...

IT'S EVERY CENT I HAVE
LEFT! I'LL BE BANKRUPT!
BUT FOR LINDA... IT'S
WORTH IT!"



RECOVERY WAS SLOWER THIS TIME. TWO WEEKS, AS CARLTON DRESSED TO LEAVE THE SANITARIUM THAT FINAL DAY, HE SMILED BRIGHTLY.

"I'M A POOR MAN, POOR, IT'S BUT PERFECTLY NOW, OR FATTERER! SUCH ARMS, SUCH LEGS... SUCH A BODY, YOU ARE AN ADAM'S NOW."

SHEER HAPPINESS SPREAD OVER CARLTON'S FACE. HE CLASPED THE DOCTOR'S HAND.

"THIS THE MONEY BROUGHT ME NO HAPPINESS, NOW I'M FOUND STRONG... HANDSOME! I'M WHAT LINDA WANTED NOW..."

"GO TO YOUR LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN, MERRILY BORN-BEEN-EVE... AND GOOD LUCK!"

CARLTON RAPIDLY FLEW TO LINDA'S APARTMENT...

LINDA: "I... WHERE'S LINDA STEWART?"

MOVED UPTOWN. HERE'S HER NEW ADDRESS!"

CARLTON RUSHED UPTOWN. LINDA'S NEW APARTMENT HOUSE WAS ONE OF THOSE LUXURIOUS NEW ONES. HE HAMMERED ON HER PENTHOUSE DOOR.

CARLTON: "LOOK, LINDA! I'M A COMPLETELY NEW MAN! IN THE WAY YOU WANTED ME! YOU'VE GOT TO MARRY ME NOW!"

LINDA LAUGHED...

"I NEVER WANTED YOU, CARLTON... EITHER WAY, YOUNG OR OLD! BUT I COULDN'T NO! TELL YOU THE TRUTH! AND I CAN'T MARRY YOU. I AM MARRIED."

"YOU'RE MARRIED?"

"BUT I AM."

THE OLD MAN DODDERED INTO THE SWAN LIVING ROOM, WITH CARLTON'S ARMS AND CARLTON'S LEGS AND CARLTON'S HEAD AND CARLTON'S BODY.

"THAT'S WHAT I WANTED, CARLTON! A MILLIONAIRE TO MARRY! I TRIED TO DISCOURAGE YOU... BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WERE POOR! LAST WEEK I FOUND MY MILLIONAIRE! THIS IS GEORGE BOOTH... MY HUSBAND!"

"GOOD LORD!"

"HELLO! NOW THERE'S A SIGHT, ER, SIGHT! A COMPLETELY WITCH LINDA ENDED UP MARRYING EVERYTHING CARLTON MADE IN THE VERY BEGINNING! HE COULD'VE SAVED HIMSELF THE TROUBLE, OH, WELL... THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO TO PIECES OVER A JADE. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE DAUL OF HORROR WITH MORE BLOOD-CURLING FIREBITE, TELL ME!"

"THEN, THIS IS THE OLD MATOR, REMINDERS YOU TO GIVE YOUR BONES FOR A RAINY DAY! IT'S EASIER TO DIE IN MATURE!"

CAR BURNING OIL? Engineer's Discovery Stops it Quick Without A Cent For Mechanical Repairs!

If your car is using too much oil—or it is sluggish, hard to start, sputters on pickup, lacks pep and power—you are paying good money for oil that's burning up in your engine instead of providing lubrication. Why? Because your engine is leaking. Friction has worn a gap between piston and cylinder wall. Oil is pumping up into the combustion chamber, fueling your motor with carbon. Gases are exploding down through this gap, going to waste.

WE WISH YOU BLESSINGS

Before you spend \$20.00 to \$150.00 for an engine overhaul, read how you can do that today without causing yourself a few minutes without having to spend a single new part, without even taking your engine down. This allows as easy as separating combustor or starting system out of a tube, thanks to the discovery of a new instant adhesive called Power Seal. This

The "Vivianite" new compound combines the fertilizing qualities of Moly. the "green" was developed, with the fertilizing properties of Vivianite, the mineral product whose particles expand under heat (Up to 10 times original size.)

Just square. Power-hauled out of the lake into your room a cylinder through the spark plug opening. It will expand over paper, paper bags and cylinder walls at your engine heat and it will FLATE every surface with a smooth, shiny, metallic film that does not come off. No amount of pressure can, paper or oil. No amount of heat can break it down. It fits the cracks, scratches and scroungs caused by engine wear. It closes the gap between worn paper bags and cylinder with an automatic self-expanding seal that stops all pinholes stops gas blow-by and reduces compression. No more piston skipping, no more engine knock. You get more power, speed, endurance.

This process, placing an oil-burnerizing coil for Moly, the
greasy metal lubricant, reduces friction in moving car parts.
It is the only lubricant坚韧 enough to be used
as U. S. atomic energy plants and jet engines. It never
dries down, never leaves your engine dry. Even when your
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metal itself. That's why you'll find amazingly little oil
you'll get headache from thousands of miles per gallon.

THE PAPERS

You don't risk a penny. Power is yours! That Power-Steal will make your car like new. Put it in your engine in 30 days. Free Trial! If you are not getting better performance out of your car than you thought possible—if you have not stopped old hunting and have not increased your dialogue—return the Power-Steal and get your money back in full. Power-Steal is absolutely harmless, a car can't hurt the finest car in any way. It can only perfect and prolong your car.



POWER SEAL MAKES WORK OUT LAST ENGINE RUN EVER MADE

Here are the Tex Engineers' measured figures showing the remarkable increase in compression obtained in a 1930 De Soto motor that had run for 60,000 miles. Just how **POWER SEAL** injection increased gas and power, reduced gas consumption, cut fuel burning nearly 50%.

197. *Artemesia* (L.) *Artemesia* (L.) *Artemesia* (L.) *Artemesia* (L.)

We simply inserted the POWER SEAL, per instructions, and made no other repairs or adjustments. Compression readings were taken before and after and showed the improvement in both cases. As a result the engine gained a lot more pickup and power which was especially noticeable on hills. When compared to our car in the sharp acceleration at all temperatures the car with the POWER SEAL was actually faster. Since the day we first started 8/17/76 on up since when the POWER SEAL was applied a smooth ride. In the winter cold, oil compression was up practically on high. We have had better starting because of this. All in all POWER SEAL, correct way to go to prevent the bent connecting rod. We just made it past the 100,000 miles and has been saving money. We are over 100,000 miles and still going strong. Money is an ever issue, the problem of conserving the car for years overhauls does not help in conserving money. 10/10/76. *Donald W. K.*

10月卷 第6期 番茄袖珍

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在這段時間內，我會繼續研究和學習，並努力將所學應用於實際問題的解決上。

For more information, contact the Bureau of Land Management, Denver Field Office, 1300 17th Street, Suite 1000, Denver, CO 80202.

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There should be a regular check on planetary motion with respect to the sun, and the planet should be checked for any changes in its motion from its previous position.

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THE
CRYPT

TALES FROM THE CRYPT



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! WELCOME, YOU DEAR LITTLE HORROR MONSTERS, TO MY NEW TERROR-TITLE! E.C.'S BROSOME THREE-SOME IS BACK IN REVOLTING FOUR-SOME, AS "THE CRYPT OF TERROR" JOINS WITH "THE VAULT OF HORROR," "THE HAUNT OF FEAR," AND "TALES FROM THE CRYPT" TO BRING YOU HEAPING HELPINGS OF HORROR IN THE OFT-REINITIATED E.C. TRADITION. I TRUST YOU'LL BE AMPLY SICKED BY THIS LATEST COLLECTION OF CADAVEROUS GAVORTIMES. AS OF NOW, ALL IS AT PEACE AT THE E.C. OFFICES, BUT I EXPECT TROUBLE WHEN THE VAULT-KEEPER AND THE OLD BITCH REALIZE THAT I NOW HAVE TWO MUGS-WABA TO TIEEM DOWN OR, WELL, THERE'S AN USE SLAUGHTERIN' YOUR ENEMIES BEFORE YOU COME TO THE BURNED BRIDGE. NO, COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR... AND TONIGHT, BOST' IN HOWLS AND INFARCS. YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER WILL LAUNCH MY NEW HAUNTEARING NEWSPRINT MARCOTTS WITH THE BLOOD-DRENCHING SPINE-TINGLING HELP-YA-YA I CALL:

UPON REFLECTION



CHESTER WAYNE TRUDGED TRAUMATICALLY ALONG THE MACADAM ROAD LEADING FROM PLAINVILLE. HIS HIGH-POWERED RIFLE WAS READY, HIS NERVOUS FINGER ON THE TRIGGER. ABOVE, A FULL, ROUND MOON THREW A PALE LIGHT ON THE COUNTRY ROAD, SILHOUETTING EACH SHADY BUSH INTO AN OBSCURE CROUCHING FIGURE. AROUND HIM, EACH FANT WHISPERED OF WHO HUNTED, "DO NOT GO BACK"...

"I SPORKE OVER NAME'S RAKED BONES TO GET THE ONE WHO DOOT IT TO HER. I'VE GOT TO KEEP PTRYING 'TVE SOF TO IT..."

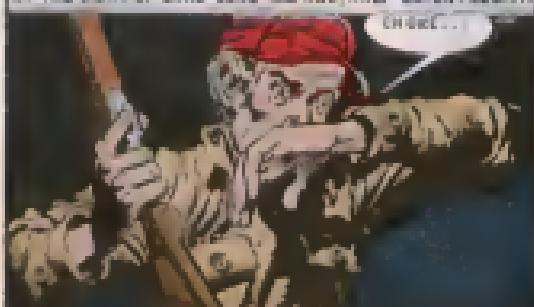


THE STARTLED CREATURE TURNED FROM ITS HUMAN PREY. A CLAMMY SWEAT BROKE OUT ON CHESTER WHEN HE SAW THE HARRY FACE, THE BLOOD DROPPING FROM ITS LIPS AND EYES...

"BAAH! OH, LORD..."



LOATH TO LOOK UPON THE GORY REMAINS THAT LAY IN THE DITCH, CHESTER WAS NEVERTHELESS DRAWN TOWARD THEM AS THOUGH BY SOME MAGNET OF MORBIDITY. HE APPROACHED ON TREMBLING LEGS... LOCKED... THEN RECOILED IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT OF BARE BONE AND RAW, HALF-EATEN FLESH...



"CHESTER..."

THINCS OF NAME MADE CHESTER MAD AND DROVE HIM ON. HE WAS ROUNDING A TURN WHEN HE SAW IT NOT FORTY FEET AHEAD. HE STOPPED ABRUPTLY AND CALLED OUT TO THE BLACK-CLODED HULK IN THE SHALLOW ROAD-SIDE DITCH...

"WHO... WHO'S THERE?"



HE WAS MUMB WITH HORROR, HALF-BLIND WITH RAGE AS HE BLASTED AWAY AT THE DISAPPEARING WORM-EATER TILL THE MAGAZINE WAS EMPTY AND THE HAMMER CLICKED DEAD ON THE EMPTY RIFLE CHAMBER.

"MISSSED HIM... BOO... NAME'S I BOO... MISSSED..."



A GREAT VIOLENT ECRMESS WRENCHED AT CHESTER'S INWARDS... AND HE TURNED, BETCHIN', AND RAN THE WHOLE WAY BACK TO PLAINVILLE...



THE MEN IN HARLEY'S TAVERN LEAPED TO THEIR FEET AS CHESTER BURST THROUGH THE DOOR, HEADED FOR THE BAR. THEY SAW THE RIFLE AND THE LOOK ON HIS FACE AND THEY KNEW...

WHO... WHO WAS A DUCK, FRANK? IT WAS TIME... FOUR ME SOME-
GHTY... THIN' STRAIGHT!



CHESTER TOSSED OFF A DOUBLE BOURBON... AND WHILE IT WAS STILL BURNING DOWN, HE PINTED OUT THE TERRIBLE DETAILS OF HIS PARFORING EXPERIENCE...

GOOD MAN! A FARMER WAS A TELL US WHO PLACE THREE MILES IT WASN'T OUT... BEEN HUNIN' ALL DAY, FARMER! NICE OUT, SURE. HE'S GONNA BE QUET A LONG, LONG TIME NOW... LIKE MY MAMIE!



AT FIRST THE MEN EXCHANGED SULTRY GLANCES OF RELIEF, BUT AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF BROOKING SILENCE, PAUL MYERS CLIMBED INTO A TABLE AND SHOUTED...

THAT MAKES FIVE VICTIMS IN AS MANY MONTHS... AND DON'T AINT WE PAYIN' FOR PROTECTION IN THIS ROTTEN TOWN? ALL WE GET FROM MAYOR HARBON IS PROMISES, SO WE WAIT TILL THAT WEREWOLF GRAB SOMEBODY CLOSE TO US BEFORE WE MAKE HARBON DO SOMETHIN'!



IT ALREADY TELL ME YOU GOT SOMEONE MORE AGENT TO CLOSE TO ME TELL THE MAYOR PAUL! MY WIFE HARBON THE BOY AND WE'LL BACK FOR UP!



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, MAYOR BURWOOD HARBON WAS AWAKENED BY SHOUTS OF HIS NAME. HE LEANED UNEASILY FROM THE BEDROOM WINDOW OF HIS COLONIAL HOME AND LOOKED DOWN AT THE ANGRY CROWD BELOW...

PLEASE, GENTLEMEN! THEN COME ON DOWN, MAYOR!



SOON, HIS PORTLY PAJAMA-CLAD FIGURE WRAPPED IN A SILK ROBE, THE DISMAYED MAYOR OF PLAINVILLE STOOD BEFORE HIS TOWN-PEOPLE, LISTENING TO THE FRIGHTFUL NEWS...

TERREBLE! TERRIBLE! I'LL SEND OFFICIAL COMDOLENCES TO HIS WIDOW IN THE MORNING...



A FAIR LOT OF SOOR THARFEE, SO, MAYOR! WHAT ABOUT THE PROTECTION YOU PROMISED US?



WHAT CAN I DO, MR. MAYOR? FOR ONE THING, THIS PREDATOR ATTACK TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE OF TOWN... BEYOND MY JURISDICTION...

MY WIFE'S BODY WAS RAUNCHED RIGHT HERE ON THE STREETS OF PLAINVILLE!



WE WANT MORE THAN WORDS, MAYOR!

WHAT'RE YOU GONE TO DO ABOUT IT, HARBON?

MAJOR HANSON TRIED TO PACIFY THE BOILED OVER CROWD.

PLEASE, SILENCE! I DON'T GET IT, MR. WAYNE. YOU SAY YOU FIRED SEVERAL LOW-HOSED BULLETS AT THIS WEREWOLF. THEY WERE SILVER BULLETS, OF COURSE! THEY'RE LIKE DUM-DUMS...



MAJOR HANSON WAS VERY ADAPT AT SHIFTING THE PRESSURE FROM HIMSELF...

WELL, I MIGHT HAVE KILLED SOMEONE WOULD GO OFF HALF-COCKED! MY DEAR MR. WAYNE... IF YOU'D TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO READ UP ON WEREWOLVES, AS I HAVE, YOU'D KNOW THAT ONLY A SILVER BULLET CAN KILL A WEREWOLF!



THE CROWD FELL SILENT WITH EMBARRASSMENT. FOR NO MAN WISHED TO ADMIT INNOCENCE TO HIS MESSIAH. MAJOR HANSON SMILED PATRONIZINGLY...

I'LL WELCOME ANYONE OF YOU TO MY LIBRARY WHO CARE TO INFORM HIMSELF ON THE HAUNTS OF THE LEPANTHROPE. MEANWHILE, MY FELLOW CITIZENS, BE CALM AND... GOOD-NIGHT...



THE MAYOR WENT BACK INTO HIS STATELY HOME, THE CROWD DISPERSED, AND CHESTER WAYNE JOINED PAUL MYERS AND CHICK ROSENBLUM IN A HUGOSSY SESSION AT MARLEY'S TAVERN.

THEY NEVER HAD A MAN BETTER AT BOUQUET OUT OF A HOT SPOT THAN MAYOR HANSON!

WE'RE NO BETTER OFF THAN BEFORE WE CALLED ON HIM!



CHESTER WAYNE ANIMATED...

YES, WE ARE! WE HAVE TIME... A WHOLE MONTH BEFORE THE NEXT FULL MOON. WE CAN START MULTY DOWN SIXTEEN COINS FOR A BULLET! WE CAN BE READY THE NEXT TIME THAT WEREWOLF SHOWS HIMSELF...



SO MOST OF THE PEOPLE OF PLAINVILLE LIVED IN DREAD OF THE COMING FULL MOON... AND THE NIGHT IT ARRIVED, EVERYONE STAYED BEHIND LOCKED DOORS AND MURKED IN BEDDING. ONLY CLARA HANSON, THE MATTRESS'S WIFE, TURTLED OUT TO VISIT HER AILED AND AILING MOTHER...

THE BOT TO ME, HANSON ALONE, MAMA HANSON WILL BE FORTIFYING ABOUT ME! PLEASE, YOU'LL TAKE IT EASY...



WHAT ELSE COULD I DO IN THIS WHEELCHAIR, CLARA?

IT WAS JUST THREE SHORT BLOCKS FROM HER MOTHER'S HOUSE TO THE HANSON HOME. CLARA WALKED UNAFRAID, UNTIL SHE SAW THE FULL YELLOW MOON HANGING HIGH ABOVE THE VILLAGE SQUARE...

GULP...THAT HEAVEN'S IT'S NOT FAR!



CLARA HAMMER HURRIED HER STEPS, FINDING SOME LITTLE COMFORT AS THE SHOR CHOKING OF HER HEELS ALONG THE DESOLATE BOULEVARD TIME WITH THE RAPID BEATING OF HER PACTIC HEART. SHE SO REACHED THE BARRA
ONLY ONE BLOOR FROM HOME, WHEN SHE HEARD THE PERRIFYING THRAL. THE SPUR AROUND... HER BLOOD TURNING TONGUE IN HER VERS...



HER ATTEMPTED SCREAM CAME FORTH AS NO MORE THAN AN ASTHMATIC WHINNIE BOVÉAL. THE FLESH-EATEN BEAST SPRANG... SINKING ITS SLEMMING FANGS INTO HER THROTTING THROAT... RIPPLING IT OPEN... FOUNTAINING THE BLOOD OVER ITS HAIRY FACE... INTO ITS RED BOILING EYES...



SHEEPISHLY, THEY RICKED UP THEIR SILVER-BULLET-LOADED CARBINES AND BALKED FROM THE TAVERN, ACROSS THE SQUARE. THEY WENT NO FURTHER THAN WHERE THE SPARLTY SKELETON OF CLARA HAMMER LAY IN A POOL OF CONGEALING BLOOD, HER BLOOD SOAKED CLOTHES STREAMING ABOUT...



WHILE JUST ACROSS THE SQUARE, IN MARLEY'S TAVERN, CHESTER BATE AND PAUL MYERS WERE FORTIFYING THEMSELVES AT THE BAR...



HAMMER, HE'S GOT
ON 4000 FEET! HE'S
DON'T TALKIN' ABOUT
IT HONEY! IF YOU'RE
GONE AFTER 'EM,
BOY, IF YOU'RE
SCARED, THEN
ADMIT IT AND
QUIT BULLSHIT!

MAJOR HAMMER WAS BLAINLY TROUBLED WHEN HE FACED THE TWO WHITE-FACED MEN ACROSS HIS THRESHOLD...



PAUL! FEARS I'M
THINKIN' THE
SAKE THINBY
YOU BETTER
GET DRESSED,
MAJOR!

THE MAYOR RECOGNIZED HIS WIFE'S CLOTHES AT ONCE, WITH MUCH LOUD SAILING AND ANGUISHED SCREAMS FELL ACROSS HER FLESH-STRIPPED BONES...

CLARA SON... MY CLARA
ALL THAT CARRYING ON
WON'T HELP
HER NOW...
LEAVE
HIM
ALONE,
PAUL!

AT LAST THE MAYOR AROKE AND HIS TEAR-REDDENED EYES BLAZED. THAT FILTHY FILTHY THIEF! I'LL GET EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN IN THIS TOWN AFTER IT!

THIS TIME IT'S YOUR WIFE AND THE SHOES ARE ON THE OTHER FOOT!

LAW OFF, PAUL!

EVERY MAN WILL BE ARMED! THERE'LL BE SILVER BULLETS FOR ALL! A VIGILANTE COMMITTEE, THAT'S WHAT WE'LL HAVE! WE'LL DIVIDE INTO GROUPS... DON'T THE COUNTRYBOYS COME THE NEXT FULL MOON? WE'LL BE WAITING!

WITHIN TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS, EVERY CAPABLE MAN IN PLAINVILLE HAD RECEIVED A RIFLE AND FIVE SILVER BULLETS. EVERYONE HAD PRACTISED WITH MOVING TARGETS. EVERYONE WAS READY. THE AFTERNOON BEFORE THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, THE MEN THREWED BEFORE MAYOR HANSON'S MARSHAL...

WE'LL START NOW, IN GROUPS OF FIVE...
IN DAYLIGHT... SO WE CAN ACQUAINT
OURSELVES WITH EACH AREA!
NOW, REMEMBER...

...STAY CLOSE TOGETHER AND MAKE SURE OF WHAT YOU'RE SHOOTING AT! WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING MOVE, MAKE CERTAIN IT ISN'T ONE OF YOUR OWN PARTY. PAIR OFF! ONE MAN USE A LIGHT WHILE THE OTHER MAN DOES THE SHOOTING! WE DON'T WANT ANY INNOCENT PEOPLE KILLED!



IT WAS TWILIGHT WHEN MAYOR HANSON, IN EARING A RED TUSSLE SHOOTING-JACKET AND SCARLET HUNTER'S CAP, CLIMBED FROM HIS CAR AT THE SENSATIONAL SPOT FOR HIS GROUP: CHESTER HAYNE GRIMES...

PIPE THE FANCY OUTFIT ON MY HONOR, PAUL. YOU COULD SEE IT IN A COAL MINE AT DROWNTIME.

HUNTING IN THE DARK IS A DANGEROUS BUSINESS, MR. HANSON. I'D RATHER BE SAFE THAN SORRY.



WHEN DAWNSIDE CAME, THE MEN WERE ALERT AND ALERT! MATT STEVENS, WITH HIS GROUP IN TOWN, SAW A SUSPICIOUS FIGURE, SCREAMED OUT AFTER IT, AND BEGAN SHOOTING...



LUCKILY, MATT'S SHOTS WERE WELL, THE FIGURE TURNED OUT TO BE A FAMILIAR DRUNK THAT ALL KNEW WELL...

WELL, WHAT'S I AIN'T GHO YOU RUM + BOOZE I'M FOR IF YOU AREN'T BITTIN' OVER THE WOLF. WHEN SOMEONE OPENIN' UP OR RECENT INVENTION?

MEANWHILE, MAYOR HANSON AND HIS PARTY'D SURROUNDED A STRANGE OLD WOMAN WALKING ALONG A LONG DARK ROAD...

LADY, YOU'RE TAKIN' A CHANCE BEIN' OUT TONIGHT. BETTER LET US SEE YOU IN ONE!

I DON'T NEED THE SICK HONEST. IT AIN'T DISEASED!

PAUL MYERS STUDIED THE OLD HAG. HOLD ON, MAYOR! WHO SAID THE WEREWOLF'S NOT TO BE A MAN? I'VE SEEN THIS. I'VE NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE A FEMALE WEREWOLF AROUND. WEREWOLF I NEVER LIKED HER LOOKS!

MAYBE YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING THERE, MYERS. I HADN'T THOUGHT I'VE SEEN THIS.

MAYOR HANSON AND PAUL MYERS REVEALED THEIR THEORY TO THE OTHERS OF THEIR PARTY...

WELL, HOW CAN WE TELL IF SHE IS THE WEREWOLF? WE'LL TAKE HER BACK TO MY PLACE! I HAVE THAT BOOK! IT TELLS HOW TO RECOGNIZE A WEREWOLF... EVEN IN HUMAN FORM!

CHET WAYNE BRANDED HIS RIFLE AND SCOPED...

AN ARROW TO YOUR BOOK, HANSON. IN LESS THAN TWENTY MINUTES, THE MOON WILL BE FULL. THEN, IF THE OLD HAG TURNS OUT TO BE WHAT WE'RE AFTER, WE LET HER HAVE IT!

...AND IF SHE DOESN'T, THEN WE'RE BUSTED. VALUABLE TIME. JONAH EVEN LET THE REAL WEREWOLF ESCAPE.

THEY MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE MAYOR'S CAR. THE OLD HAG FOUGHT THEM AS THEY TRIED TO PUSH HER IN. BUT EVEN AT PAUL'S HAND...

OFF, THE DIRTY BITCH! I AIN'T GONE! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME DO!

PAUL SOLVED THE PROBLEM. HE BROKE HIS RIFLE-BUTT, CLOTHING THE OLD WOMAN ACROSS THE SIDE OF HER HEAD. THIS... THIS IS EXCRUCIATING! AFTER ALL, WE STILL HAVE NO PROOF! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HIT HER...

AAA, CLIMB OUT MY BACK, MAYOR AND STEP ON IT! SHIT OUT COLD!



IT TOOK HIM OVER FIFTEEN MINUTES TO REACH THE MAYOR'S HOUSE IN TOWN. BY THAT TIME, THE OLD MAN HAD PRACTICALLY

I'LL GET THE BOOT AND COME RIGHT OUT! HOLD HIM!

I STILL THINK YOU'RE CRAZY, HARTON! IN LESS THAN THREE MINUTES THE BOAT WILL BE FULL, AND THEN WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE!

MAYOR HARTON HURRIED INTO THE HOUSE, STUMBLING DOWN THE HALL LIT ONLY BY THE CANDLE LIBRARY. HE STOPPED SUDDENLY AS HE REACHED THE DOOR AND STARED AT THE GLEAMING EYES BURNING IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE...

WHAT THE... SOMETHING'S IN THERE! IT'S FF...

MAYOR HARTON MOVED FORWARD SLOWLY, HIS RIFLE READY. THEN, ALL AT ONCE, HE SAW IT, THE MAD FACE, THE GLEAMING TEETH FLASHING FROM BEHIND THE SNARLING GRUEL MOUTH. HE SCREAMED...

IT'S THE WEREWOLF!



HE FIRED, POINT-BLADE, AGAIN AND AGAIN. THE VILE FEROCIOUS BEAST JUST STOOD THERE, SNARLING AT HIM.

MY GOD! THE SILVER BULLETS! THEY DON'T KILL HIM! I COULDN'T MISS... NOT AT THIS RANGE...



MAYOR ELWOOD HARTON STOOD BEFORE THE FULL-LENGTH LIBRARY MIRROR, SHAKING AND SHRIEKING, STARING HORRIFICALLY AT THE BULLET HOLES HE'D MADE WHEN HE'D SHOT AT HIS OWN REFLECTION.



AND THAT'S THE FIRST SCREAM-STORY IN MY NEW PUBLISHING PERIODICAL, FENRIS. NATURALLY, THEY SHOT MAYOR WEREWOLF AFTER THAT. IN FACT THEY PUMPED HIM SO FULL OF SILVER BULLETS, HE HAD TO BE EMBALMED INTO HIS GRAVE WITH A DOZEN OF THEM! A COUPLE OF BURG-DOUBTERS HEARD ABOUT THE SILVER... AND THAT'S ANOTHER STORY! I'LL TELL THAT UP SOME OTHER TIME. HOW THE HAIRY-KEEPER KEELS WITH HIS CREEPY CONTRIBUTION TO THIS HORROR MEET, I'LL TELL YOU LATER, Y'KNOW, KNO-



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HOI, HOI! AND NOW THAT C.R. HAS CURLED YOUR ARTERIC BLOOD, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR HOIEST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER - NAMELY, ME - TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A SPINE-TIRRING, HAUNTEATING NOVELETTE FROM MY CREEP COLLECTION. LET'S HOI! OH... LET'S NOT SELL 'EM! THIS IS A GOOD BOOY ONE! IT'S CALLED...

BLIND ALLEYS

THE "HOME" WAS OLD AND INBENT-STARVED AND DRAFTY AND BADLY IN NEED OF REPAIR. THE ROOF LEAKED AND THE WINDOWS RATTLED AND WERE COVERED WITH YEARS OF DUST AND DIRT. THE INMATES OF THE HOME WALKED DUST-FACED AND SILENT THROUGH CRACKED PLASTER HALLS, OR SAT IN DIRTY ROOMS ON CRANKING BEGS. THEY SHIVERED IN THE COLD WHEN WINTER CAME... WHEN THERE WAS NO STEAM TO WARM THE BUSTED RADIATORS...



...AND THEY SWELTERED IN THE HEAT WHEN SUMMER BURNED... WHEN LONG-BROKEN FANS LAY TIE AND UNREPAIRED AND UNABLE TO SWIFT A BREATH OF COOLING AIR...



BUT THEY COULD NOT SEE THE PAINT-FEELER WALLS... THE DIRT-GLOOVED WINDOWS... THE DUSTY AND DOD-WEEDED HALLS OF THIS, THEIR HOME... THESE INMATES, THEY COULD NOT SEE THE ROACHES AND THE RATS SCAMPERING ACROSS THE UNWASHED FLOORS...



... AS THIS WAS A "HOME" FOR THE BLIND... FOR STRETCHED SOULS WHO LIVED IN WORLDS OF DARKNESS... WHO STARED WITH DISEASED EYES AT THE MURKINESS AROUND THEM... AND YET ANNE AND HATED ALL OF IT...



FOR THE LOSS OF ONE SENSE ONLY TENDS TO SHARPEN THE OTHERS... TO FORGE THEM MORE SHARPLY... TO MAKE THEM MORE ACUTE. THE INHABITED JOKE BECAUSE THEY COULD TASTE... AND TOUCH... AND SMELL AND HEAR. THEY COULD TASTE THE SPOILED AND ROTTED FOOD PLACED BEFORE THEM AT MEALTIMES...



THEY COULD TOUCH THE STROKED, FILTH COVERED... THE DUST LAYERS COVERING EVERYTHING...



THEY COULD SMELL THE FOUL ODORS OF BACKWATER AND FAULTY PLUMBING AND POOR SANITATION AND NEGLECT...



THEY COULD HEAR THE RATS SCAMPERING AND THE ROACHES CRAWLING AND THE TERMITES BURROWING AND THE LICE AND BED-BUGS AND FLIES AND A THOUSAND OTHER CREATURES OF FILTH THAT MOVE...



AND THEY COULD HEAR OTHER CREATURES TOO... OTHER CREATURES OF FILTH THAT MOVE. THEY COULD HEAR MR. BROOKFIELD, THE MONEY DIRECTOR, IN HIS OFFICE-APARTMENT, DOWNTOWN, ENTERTAINING HIS LATEST LADY-FRIEND WITH THE MONEY HE'D SAVED ON THEM... THE INMATES...



THEY COULD HEAR HIS ALMOST MANIACAL LAUGHTER AND THE CLINKING OF CHAMPAGNE GLASSES. THEY COULD SMELL THE MOUTH-MINTING ODORS OF THE LADY-SUPPER HE WAS ENJOYING, AND THEY COULD SEE, IN THEIR MURKIE EYES, THE LUXURIES WITH WHICH HE'D DELIGHTFULLY SURROUNDED HIMSELF AT THEIR EXPENSE...



YES, SUMMER BRUNSWALD HAD indeed surrounded himself with luxuries... paid for with the allowments given him for each blind inmate. WEIRD PAINT AND PLASTER DREAMY WALLS that they'd never see, when AT could have an AIR-CONDITIONER for THESE BLIND SUMMER DAYS...



WHY GIVE THOSE POOR MISERABLE BLIND FOOLS BEAUTY IF THEY COULD NOT APPRECIATE BEAUTY? SUMMER BRUNSWALD'S FELT THAT WHAT HE HAD SHAPED ON THE WALLS... CUT CORNERS HERE... DERIVED THERE... AND WITH THE SURPLUS, HE'S SUPPLIED HIMSELF WITH BEAUTY...

FOR FURNITURE... SOFA BOOTS... PLUSH RUGS... EXPENSIVE DRAPES... AN OCCASIONAL EXHIBIT OF FEMALE COMPANIONSHIP... THEY WERE ALL SUMMER'S TO ENJOY. HE'S EVEN BOUGHT A DOG - A MEDIUM DOG. HE'S HAD A GOOD REASON...



AND WITH THE DOG AT HIS SIDE, SUMMER'S WALKED SELF-CONFIDENTLY BEFORE THEM, KNOWING THAT HIS SIGHT AND THE DOG'S STRENGTH WOULD KEEP HIM FROM HARM...



WHY LAUNDRY SHEETS AND BLANKETS AND CLOTHES OF DIRT-SMACK AND SWEAT-STAINS THAT THEY'D NEVER SEE WHEN HE COULD HAVE A HEATER FOR THOSE BETTER, BETTER BLINDS...



FOR SUMMER'S KNOWN THAT ANOTHER SENSE HAD REPLACED THE BLIND'S SENSE OF SIGHT... A DEEP-SEDED SENSE... AND EACH DAY, HE'S SEEN IT IN THEIR HEARTS - BLIND EYES, IN THEIR SILENT BRAIN FACES. HE'S SEEN THEIR GROWING HATE... SO HE'S BOUGHT THE DOG FOR PROTECTION...



AND SO, HE'S BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY HIS FRIENDLY LITTLE ALLOWMENTS... LIKE TRAPPING HELPLESS UNSUSPECTING INMATES AS THEY'D BETTER BLINDLY BY HIM...



...OR REMOVING SOMETHING THAT THEY'D COME TO KNOW WAS THERE AND COUNTED ON...



...YET, BURNER ABUSED himself with his charges' inability to see. HE'D BEEN RADICALIC with his tortures, and HE'D known FAY OR HER DETAILS, and his charges had sat in their world of darkness and waited, LISTENING.



...AND TONIGHT, THEIR OPPORTUNITY CAME...

BURNER, BOBBY, BOOGIE, BOOGIE! HERE, BOBBY! HERE'S SOME MEAT!



...SO THEY LURED THE DOG DOWN INTO THE OLD MUSTY CELLAR OF THE HOME WITH SOME MEAT—SCRAPPS THEY'D BAKED FROM THEIR SCANT MEALS...



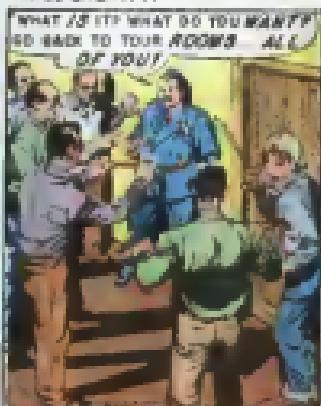
AND THEN THEY WAITED. THEY WAITED FOR SUMMER'S FRIENDS OF THE EVENING TO LEAVE...



THEY WAITED FOR SUMMER TO MISS HIS BOB...



...AND THEN THEY STRUCK! BLINDLY UNSEEING... THEY SURROUNDED THEM HATED ENEMY...



...AND DRAGGED HIM TO THE CELLAR TO GET TO ANOTHER WAITING CIRCLE...



BUT SUMMER'S ONLY ANSWER WAS THE SOFT WHINE OF THE BOB IN THE SLEEPING CIRCLE...



THEN THEY BEGAN TO WORK. THEY DRAGGED OUT OLD
BEAMERS AND RUSTY NAILS AND LONG-PILE SAWZ...



AND THEY WENT THROUGH THE HOME AND CUT AND RIPPED AND CHIPPED THE LUMBER THEY NEEDED...



SUNNER LISTENED TO THE HAMMERING GOING THROUGH THE CELLAR. HE LISTENED TO THEIR SINGLES AND CHATTER AND HE WORRIED...



THE DAY PASSED AND NIGHT CAME AGAIN. SUNNER'S OWN STOMACH ACHED WITH HUNGER. AND STILL THEY HAMMERED AND SINGED AND LAUGHED AND TAULED...



SUNNER HIMSELF WAS HALF-CRAZED WITH HUNGER AS THE THIRD NIGHT CAME. AND THEN, TOWARDS MIDNIGHT, THE HAMMERING STOPPED. THE CELLAR WAS SOON-DELY FLOODGED WITH LIGHT. EVEN BRUTUS STOPPED SNARLING IN ANTICIPATION...



AND HE LISTENED AS THE NIGHT PASSED AND DAWN CAME AND THE DOG IN THE CUPBOARD HEARD GROWLING AND BARKING AND SCRATCHING AS ITS STOMACH GRUMBLED...



THE DOG IN THE NEXT CUPBOARD HOWLED ALL THAT NIGHT, BLODGERING AND BARKLING AND SCRATCHING. SUNNER SHUDDERED. THE DOG WAS A BEAST, NOW... A HUNGER-CRAZED BEAST. AND THE HAMMERING WENT ON...



DAWN CAME AGAIN AND THE SECOND DAY PASSED. NEXT DOOR, THE DOG WAS FIGHTING WITH ITSELF, THROWING ITSELF AGAINST THE CUPBOARD BINS AND HOWLING MAD...



TRY STOOD BEFORE HIM... DIRTY, SWEATED, TIRED FROM LONG HOURS OF LABOR... THE UNHATED... THE BLIND UNKNOWN CARPENTER. SUNNER SLIPPED OUT AT THEM...



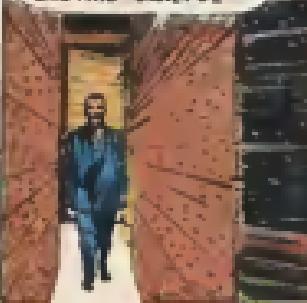
GUNNER STOOD UP AS THEY DARTED OFF. HE COULD HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS FADE AS THEY ROUNDED CORNERS AND RAN DOWN LONG CORRIDORS THAT TURNED AND TWISTED AND DOUBLED BACK. GUNNER STARTED...

THEY... THEY BUILT A MAZE & A PUZZLE! I HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT!



GUNNER LAUGHED TO HIMSELF AS HE STARTED OUT OF HIS CIRCLE...

THE FOREST IF I'M CAREFUL... IF I TAKE MY TIME... I'LL NEVER HAVE TO FEEL THE WALLS... JUST WALK SLOWLY, LIKE THIS. CAREFUL...



HE BRUSHED AGAINST THE RAZOR BLADES, SLASHING HIS FLESH. HE STUMBLED AND GOT UP... RAN ON FIGHT-ENED-WILLE DOWN THROUGH THE TWISTED, DOUBLING-BACK MAZE CORRIDORS WITH THE RAZOR-LINED WALLS AND THE SLICKING HOUND close behind.



AND THEN GUNNER SAW THE GLEAMING GLITTERING BLIVERS OF STEEL EMBEDDED IN THE MAZE WALLS...

RAZOR BLADES! THE WALLS ARE LINED WITH RAZOR BLADES! THEY WANT ME TO CUT MYSELF!

MURK, MY BROWN WALKS! HURRY!



A SOUND BEHIND GUNNER FROM HIS BLOOD! A SNARL AND A SPLASH OF A DOG, SPANNED.

BRUTAL! HUNGER-CRAZED BRUTES! THEY'RE FREEED NOW TOO!



GUNNER BEGAN TO RUN. HE HAD TO REACH FREEDOM BEFORE THAT STARVED DOG CAUGHT HIM. HE RAN DOWN THE TWISTING MAZE-CORRIDORS... THE SOUND OF THE LOVING SMACKING DOG BEHIND HIM.

OH, LORD... LORD...



AND THEN SOME IDIOT TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS.



GODS! WHERE NOW, SURNER? NOW, NOW, NOW! DON'T GO TO PIECES! AFTER ALL, I'VE ALMOST LIKE BEEN BLIND! WELL, KIDDIES, THAT'S MY SICKNESS-STORY FOR THIS FIRST ISSUE OF C.I.E. IT'S NOT MEAT, NOW IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE HOLE OF HORROR AND TURN YOU BACK TO HIM...

AS THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF A CORPSE SAID WHEN THEY WERE THROWN TO THE UNDERTAKER: "WE'LL NOT FORGET YOU AGAIN!" HE'



GONE TO SEED

It was back-breaking work, but it *had* to be done. Right away, too. He couldn't risk hiding the body of his wife in the cellar any longer . . . one of the farm hands might accidentally stumble over the corpse and start asking mighty dangerous questions. It was urgent, Dan Geer knew, to dispose of Emily right now, in this field he was plowing for spring planting. No sense in leaving a murdered wife around for the law to find!

Dan Geer heard the farm hands chattering over in the next field . . . he'd have to bawl 'em out about all this horsing around on *his* time. But at the moment he was too busy trying to gouge a hole in the ground. At first he'd been worried about the noise his shovel would make as he burrowed into the earth, but that had been taken care of without much trouble. The motor of the idling plow made so much noise that those loafers working for him wouldn't pay him any mind. And the bulk of the machine had been carefully maneuvered into place so that it acted as a shield between him and the overalled men seedling the adjoining acre. Thus, Dan Geer had resolved, was to be a *private* burial!

Dan Geer crouched low, in the shadow of the plow. By stretching out full length, he managed to tug the corpse from behind the grumbling machine and nudge it into the makeshift grave. There would be less than a foot of dirt blanketing Emily's body . . . but as soon as the hired hands got a day off he'd hurry back and dig a good deep hole to house the corpse. Within a few weeks the seeds'd be sprouting and the field would burst into furious bloom. Dan Geer grinned as he patted the last shovelful of dirt into place. Not only

was he getting rid of this devil he'd grown to hate . . . he was also helping to fertilize the coming crop!

He straightened up and surveyed his work with a critical eye. His eyes popped: one of Emily's hands was sticking up out of the soil! He lunged forward . . . and heard, with dread, the sound of voices approaching. Those bums who worked for him were coming across the field in his direction!

Dan Geer sprang toward the droning plow. If he could move the machine sideways just a few feet . . . set it directly over Emily's body . . . the danger of the moment could be averted. He turned once, to look back at the tell-tale mound . . . and his face slid out from under him. His arms flailed the air frantically as he tried to regain his balance: his hand crushed sharply against the gear lever. The plow started immediately to swing in a rumbling circle, because of the way he had cramped the steering wheel. In morionless horror he saw the gleaming blades bearing down on him!

Dan Geer screamed in alarm. Then the razor-sharp metal clashed through his flesh . . . the ponderous steel crunched over his writhing body . . . the huge wheels ground over him so that he was drenched in his own gushing blood.

By the time the farm hands reached him, Dan Geer was slashed almost beyond recognition. With gaping wonder the hired men stared down at Dan Geer's corpse . . . buried alongside that of his wife Emily, in the gory, blood-spattered grave. It was a real family plot!

E.C. WENT TO SEA IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER NEW TREND...



AND WE CAME UP WITH...
SIGHS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND...

PIRACY

NOW YOU SEARCH
FOR IT!

BUT IF YOU CAN'T FIND **PIRACY**
AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND, YOU
CAN **SUBSCRIBE**! JUST FILL OUT
THE COUPON AND MAIL, TOGETHER
WITH **ONE HUNDRED PIECES OF
CENT** (THAT'S ONE BUCK, LAND-
LUBBERS!), TO:

THE SEARCH EDITORS OF
PIRACY
ROOM 104
229 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

OKAY, SHOO RATS! YOU BRAHMAHED ME?
I enclose \$1.00 FOR THE NEXT EIGHT ISSUES
OF **PIRACY**!

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

A POINT OF ORDER! IF YOU'RE EXPECTING E.C.'S NEWEST HORROR MAG TO BE BETTER THAN TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND THE HAUNT OF FEAR, YOU'LL BE SADLY DIS-APPOINTED! IT'S ONLY JUST AS GOOD!



INVESTIGATE YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND FOR THE FIRST "JUST-AS-GOOD" ISSUE! HOWEVER IF YOU'RE TIED UP WITH RED TAPE (ADHESIVE, THAT IS!) AND YOU'D RATHER SUBSCRIBE, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IN, TOGETHER WITH AN UNDOCTORED PHOTO OF GEORGE WASHINGTON ON A \$1.00 BILL. YOU'LL RECEIVE 8 UNCROPPED ISSUES IN THE MAIL.

THE CRYPT-KEEPER	ROOM 704	225 LAFAYETTE STREET	N.Y.C. 13, N.Y.
HERE'S MY BUCK. SEND ME THE NEXT 8 ISSUES OF YOUR NEWEST MAG, THE CRYPT OF TERROR.			
NAME _____			
ADDRESS _____	ZONE NO. _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____		

HERE'S HOW ONE FAILURE TURNED HIS MISERABLE LIFE INTO A HORRIBLE...

SUCCESS STORY



THE POLICE SURGEON INSERTED THE HOLLOW NEEDLE INTO ELMER'S ARM AND SECONDS LATER THE DODUM PENTOTHAL SOLUTION WAS FLOWING INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM, TAKING ITS EFFECT. ELMER'S SHRIIL MAMBO, LAUGHTER FADES INTO A WHIRRING SIGH, THE RAGING FURY OF HIS CONVULSIVE STRUGGLES SUBSIDED INTO HELPLESS EXHAUSTION. THE THREE BRAINY POLICEMEN RELAXED THEIR HOLD THIER, AND WEPED THEIR THICK-BEAMED BROW. ELMER FRETON SLUMPED LIMPLY ON THE SHABBY SOFA, HIS PLACED FACE GRAYED TO A YELLOW-GREENISH HUE. HIS USUALLY SOFT, LIQUID-BROWN EYES WERE BLAZED AND STARING NOW. HE STARTED TO SPEAK WITHOUT EMOTION IN A GROWLING MONOTONE...

"I'M SORRY I DID IT! IT... IT HAD TO BE THIS WAY. DON'T YOU SEE?"

"NO MR. FRETON, WE DON'T SEE. YOU'D BETTER TELL US ABOUT IT!"



ELMER'S FACE TOOK ON A THOUGHTFUL EXPRESSION AND HIS EYES SHADED OVER WITH A DISTANT LOOK, HAUNTED BY THE MEMORIES OF THE PAST. HE SHEDDED TEARS, THEN SPOKE AGAIN IN A COLORLESS DRONING

"...I WAS ALWAYS A FRIEND MAN. IT'S NOT GOOD FOR A MAN TO BE TWICE... ESPECIALLY A MARRIED MAN. ESPECIALLY A MAN MARRIED TO A WOMAN LIKE JOAN."



"MAYBE WE COULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TOGETHER IN OUR LITTLE APARTMENT... JOA AND I. BUT ONE EVENING HER FOLKS CAME TO DINNER. HER FATHER WAS ALL TENSE, BURSTING WITH NEWS THAT HE FINALLY EXPLODED ON ME AT DESSERT..."

"ELMER, YOU MUST TELL ME. I'M WONDERING HOW YOU TWO...

"COME MR AND I DON'T GIVE YOU TWO A WEDDING GIFT."





"FOR AN ENTIRE FIVE WEEKS, I HAD NO HOME. WE FOUND THIS PLACE... SMALL, COMFORTABLE, A DREAM COTTAGE. THE DOWN PAYMENTS FURNISHED THE PLACE EMPTIED MY BANK ACCOUNT, BUT I WAS BLISSFULLY HAPPY. THE SUNDAY AFTER WE MOVED IN, THE WALLACES CAME TO SEE US REST..."



THE POINT IS, CLIMER, WE HAD TO GO INTO HOCK TO GET THOSE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR YOU, AND THEM BUSINESS BLOWED DOWN, AND... RIGHT NOW... WHAT WITH WHAT I OWE... I...



"I WAS BEING TADED FOR A WELL-PLANNED RAID... AND MY LOVING WIFE HAD THE STEERING WHEEL IN HER OWN LITTLE CLUTCHING HANDS..."



"THAT WAS THE FIRST PAIN RUMBLING OF THE TEMP-FEST YET TO COME. THE WALLACES GAVE UP THEIR APARTMENT AND MOVED IN WITH US. SHE WAS A MOST GENEROUS DAUGHTER..."



"TEMPORARY, SHE SAID! BUT BECAUSE I KNEW IT, THEY'D BEEN THERE FIVE WEEKS. I COULD JUST ABOUT MANAGE TO MEET MY BILLS. IF THERE WEREN'T OTHER DEMANDS ON MY SMALL INCOME."

BUT, I CAN'T AFFORD A T.V. SET, MR. WALLACE...

THAT'S GRATITUDE! I GIVE YOU \$1,000 FOR A HOME, AND YOU EXPECT ME TO FURNISH IT, TOO?"

"BELIEVE ME, I'M GRATEFUL... BUT THAT MONEY WAS JUST ENOUGH TO LET ME GO INTO DEBT FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS. SADDLED WITH A MORTGAGE, I'VE GOT PAYMENTS TO MEET... ON THAT... AND THE OTHER FURNITURE... AND...

THEN A FEW MORE DOLLARS A MONTH WONT HURT! TELL YOU WHAT? I'LL PUT THE TEN BLOCK DOWN ON THE T.V. SET!"

"AFTER MR. WALLACE NOT HIS T.V. SET, MRS. WALLACE HAD A REQUEST;

YOU'LL SEE, ELMER, WITH WHAT YOU GAVE ON LAUNDRY FOR THE FOUR OF US, THIS MAMMOTH MACHINE WILL PAY FOR ITSELF!"

"MONTHS WENT BY, MY BURDEN GREW AND WEIGHED UPON ME LIKE A MILESTONE. ONE DAY I FOUND THE COURAGE TO TALK TO IDA."

"THE CORNERS OF IDA'S MOUTH DROPPED, AND HER EYES WERE COLD AND HARD... PIERCING ME THROUGH AS SHE SPOKE...

"I LIKE YOUR FOLKLOR IDEA, BUT I CAN'T GO ON SUPPORTING THEM FOR...

SUPPORTERS? AFTER WHILE THEY'VE GOT? WHAT A LOADSOME WAY TO REPAY THEM FOR THEIR GENEROSITY!"

"YOU'RE BLAMING MOTHER AND DADDY BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT A FOOD PROVIDER. YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW IT, ELMER. I'M NOT SATISFIED... NOT AT ALL SATISFIED. I THOUGHT YOU HAD AMBITION! I THOUGHT YOU'D GO PLACES—SET AHEAD IN THE WORLD. INSTEAD, YOU'RE STUCK IN A POOR FATHER JOB."

IDA SPONCE BITTERLY AND LOUDLY... LOUD ENOUGH FOR HER PARENTS TO HEAR. THEY ACCEPTED IT AS AN EXPLANATION TO JUNK HER FIERCE MARSHMALLOW...

SOMETIMES I WISH YOU HADN'T... WELL... TO BETTER NOT SAY WHAT I'M THINKING!"

I THOUGHT YOU HAD GUTS, BOY! I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO BET AGAINST...

"DRIVEN MORE BY DESPERATION AND DEBT THAN BY THEIR BOOM, I FINALLY GATHERED THE COURAGE TO ASK MY BOSS, MR. BENTLY, FOR A RAISE. BUT THE MINUTE I ENTERED HIS PLUSH OFFICE...

"I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR BOOM, PRESTON. YOU'VE BEEN SELLING CARDS... LESS LATELY. SLOPPY... VERY SLOPPY...

"... I DON'T MEANZE, MR. BENTLY! I'M ADOPTING BETTER TO BETTER IN THE FUTURE! I PROMISE!"

"I HAD UNCOINED A DIME BY COMPLAINING AGAINST
IDIO'S POLLS, AND FROM THAT DAY ON, A SPITEFUL,
TORMENT OF CRITICISM POURLED THROUGH THE
FLOODGATES AT ME..."

"WHAT ABOUT THAT?
RAISE I TOLD YOU
TO ASK FOR, ELMERT?
WHEN ARE YOU GOING
TO GET ENOUGH
PEACE?"

"ASK FOR? YOU DON'T
ASK FOR A RAISE? YOU
DEMAND IT! THAT'S THE
ONLY WAY TO GET AHEAD.
BY DEMANDING..."



"...AND I'LL ALWAYS GET THE SAME
RESPONSE..."

"HOL-DEON! HOOL-LORD, MAN!
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD
IN THIS WORLD?"



"SUDENLY THERE'S BE A VIOLENT CHURNING IN THE PIT OF MY
STOMACH AND I HAVE TO RUN FROM THE ROOM..."

"SO ON! DON'T I WINE
IN YOUR SHOES? I WOULDN'T
WANT TO HEAR THE TRUTH
ABOUT MYSELF, ELMERT!"

"BEEF? YOU TRY TO
TELL HIM SOMETHING
FOR HIS OWN GOOD
AND HE RUNS OFF IN
A HUFF! HE'S INSOLATED!"



"HOW COULD I TELL THEM MR. BENTLY HAD MORE THAN
REFUSED ME A RAISER THEY GAVE ME NO PEACE. FROM
THE MOMENT I CAME HOME FROM WORK..."

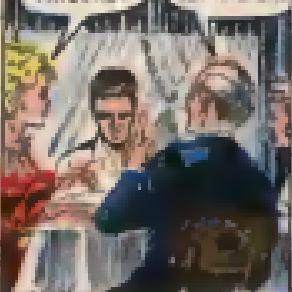
"WELL, ELMERT HOW'D YOU
MAKE OUT? DID YOU TELL THAT
BOSS OF YOURS TO COME
ACROSS OR GET A NEW BOSS?"



"I TOLD HIM
NOTHIN', MR. WALLACE.
NOBODY TALKS THAT
WAY TO MR. BENTLY!"

"EVERY MEAL BECAME A NIGHT-
MARE, FROM THE TIME I SIT
DOWN..."

"YOU'RE A FAILURE. ALL MY
LIFE I
STOOD A
FAILURE!"



"I'D FORCE MYSELF TO EAT, AND
THE PATELESS FOOD WOULD SOUR
ON THE WAY DOWN..."

"DON'T BRAKE FOUR BREAKS,
HERBERT! YOU CAN'T TURN A
JELLY-FISH INTO A TIGER
SHRIMP, I ALREADY SAID!"



"I'D WEEVE IT TO THE BATHROOM... MOST OF
THE TIME... AND ALL BUT HEAVE UP MY
INSIDES..."

"YOU MARRIED
A REAL
LEMON, IDA!"

"I'LL NEVER
AMOUNT TO
ANYTHING!"



"NOR DID THE TORMENT STOP WHEN WE WENT TO BED. Ida would rag me till she was hoarse, and I'd cover my head with my pillow, but it'd still hear."

ONLY SIXTY-SEVEN MISERABLE DOLLARS A WEEK... IN THESE DAYS I'M ASHAMED FOR MOTHER AND DADDY TO KNOW... BUT OF COURSE THEY DO KNOW, THEY KNOW THE KIND OF CLOTHES I WEAR. THEY SEE THE FURNITURE THROUGH THE DRAPE... JUNE!"

PLEASE... IDA! IT'S LATE...

"WHERE IN HELL ALL I COULD STAND, I'D HURRY FROM THE LIVING ROOM."

NEVER MIND, MOTHER! FROM NOW ON, I'LL DO THE BUYING! WE CAN'T AFFORD MUCH, MAYBE, BUT WHAT WE DO GET WILL BE THE BEST!"

"EVER A LOCKED DOOR HAS NO GUARANTEE OF PRIVACY."

"ARE YOU GOING TO STAY IN THERE ALL NIGHT, ELMER? LISTEN... ABOUT THE EV' BEEF? I WAS DOWNTOWN TODAY, TALKING TO A DEALER ABOUT A TRADE-IN ON A LARGER SCREEN, AND...

"SO THE BORTHE DRAGGED INTO TEARS AND THE WALLACE STAYED ON WITH US... BANGING THE MOUNTAIN COMPLAINS ALWAYS COMPLAINING..."

"YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU BOUGHT THAT BURNING MACHINERY? I TOLD YOU IT DIDN'T PAY TO BUY CHEAP! WELL, IT'S READY FOR THE JUNKHEAR!"

"IT WON'T GET LONELY THERE, BELIEVE ME. IT'LL HAVE THAT STUPID TWELVE-INCH-SCREEN T.V. SET FOR COMPANY."

"THIS MORNING, AS ALWAYS, WE SAT AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE AND I LISTENED TO THEM TALKING. TALKING, AND HEARING, THE STORM GATHERED. I COULD HEAR IT RUMBLING..."

A MAN WITHOUT AMBITION IS A WALKING CORPSE, ELMER! I KNOW I'M REPEATING MYSELF, BUT TRY TO BE A SUCCESS. TRY, ELMER. ELMER, YOU LISTENIN'?"

"WHAT ONCEVER FEE, I'LL TRY?"

"I WAS TOO TIMID TO ADMIT IT TO MYSELF THEN, BUT IT'D COME TO HATE IDA AND HER MOTHER AND FATHER. TO BE SHAVING IN THE MORNING AND MY WIFE WOULD COME IN AND THE DAY'S RAGINGS WOULD BEGIN..."

"I DON'T SEE WHY DADDY SHOULD HAVE TO KEEP POUNDING IT INTO YOU! YOU SHOULD JUST TRY TO GET AHEAD YOURSELF, ELMER..."

I KNOW, DEAR...

"AND SOON, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, I DIDN'T GO TO WORK. I WANDERED AROUND THE STREETS, WONDERING WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ME. LISTENING TO THE STORM THUNDERING IN THE DISTANCE, COMING CLOSER... CLOSER... READY TO BREAK AT ANY MOMENT..."

"WHY DON'T I GET ANGRY EVERYBODY ELSE DOES? JIVE BEEF FOR IVE... HER JIVE..."

IVE... OH JIVE..."



"WHEN I GOT HOME THAT NIGHT, LATE FOR DINNER, THEY JUST STARED AT ME... IDA AND MR. WALLACE AND MRS. WALLACE... THE STORM RUMMLES AROUND... THREATENING... THREATENING TO BREAK... THERE... IN MY THROBBING HEAD... AND I JUST STARED BACK AT THEM..."



"I RAN OUT... BUT NOT TO THE BATH-ROOM THIS TIME. I RAN TO THE KITCHEN... THROUGH THE RAGING STORM, I CAME BACK WITH THE MEAT CLEAVER."

"THE STORM SHRIEKED IN MY BRAIN. WHITE BLINDING LIGHTNING FLASHES EXPLODED. THE BLACK FIRE TURNED RED, RED, SPURTING RED AS I SWUNG THE CLEAVER."

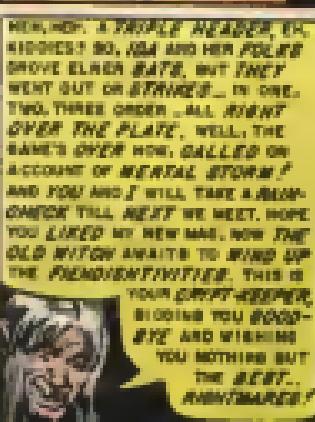
"THERE, SUDDENLY, THE STORM TORE LOOSE... HOWLING, JOKING, BLACK AROUND ME... THUNDERING... WILD TEMPEST-FURY AND ABOVE THE STORM, THEIR VOICES... THEIR RASTY VOICES...



"ELMER PRESTON STARES STRAIGHT AHEAD, SMILING. THE WILD GLEAM RETURNED TO HIS EYES, AND HE CHOKED OUT MORE WORDS BETWEEN SHORT, HIGH-PITCHED BURSTS OF LAUGHTER..."



"AND SLOWLY, THE POLICEMEN FOLLOWED ELMER'S WILD GAZE TO THE DINNER TABLE... TO THE MEAT PLATE, SETTING... AND THE PLATES WITH THEIR HAIRCOMING FATE, STARED BACK AT THEM..."



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! AND NOW IT'S WIND-UP SPOT IN CULT'S NEW CREEPY COMIC, AND YOUR DIVIDER-CHEF, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY TO STIR UP HER CRUDDY CAULDRON AND LEAK OUT A LURID LITERARY LUNCHEON. THIS TASTY TALE OF TERROR-TREMORS IS TOLD BY ONE TONY BARRETT. LISTEN, BOY, AS HE BAPS OUT THE DELIRIOUS DUCH HE CALLS...

TATTER UP!

HEY I'M TONY BARRETT. I'M NOT A BAD LOOKIN' GUY. I'M TONNY, TOO. THIRTY-FOUR. OH, SO HOW COME I COULD SIT AROUND ON A ROT-REDDIN' COUCH, HOLDIN' MAMMY WITH A BRITTLE-TOOTHED MAMMIE NAMED FANNY DODDIN? HOW COME I COULD STAND THE MILDOW-YELLOWED WALL PAPER... THE CRACKED CEILIN',... THE WHOLE HOUSE STINKIN' LIKE THE BIRD OF A DUE-UP COFFIN... AND THE STINK OF FANNY HERSELF, YEAH, THAT'S RIGHTEY! YOU NOT THE PICTURE FANNY DODD WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LOADED OF...

...I BEEN MEANIN' T' ASK YOU, FANNY. I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW IF I... I BEEN MEANIN' T' ASK YOU IF YOULL MARRY ME!

OH, TONY! I'VE BEEN FEARING YOU'D ASK ME... DREAMIN' OF IT... BUT NEVER REALLY BELIEVING YOU WOULD. OH, FEE, TONY! YES! I WILL MARRY YOU!



BARRETT

SURE I WANTED THAT WICKEDONE WITCH FOR A WIFE. I WANTED TO MARRY THE HUNDRED-WEARD AFFORTUNE TO HEARD ABOUT. THE COUCH HER FIRST HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER. THE MERRABLE WITCH WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE EVERY LAST CENT OF IT. AND... FANNY... IS THAT FOUL-SMELLIN' FILTHY HOUSE...

THEN I GUSS...CHORE THIS CALLS FOR A KISS!

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN KISSED, TONY!



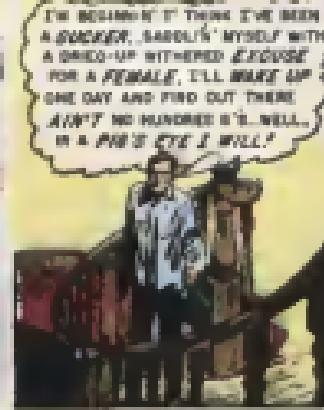
WELL, I'LL SHAP THE DISGUSTIN' DETAILS EXCEPT TO SAY THAT PAIN BECAME MIRE. TONY BARRETT, AND I STARTED HITTIN' THE BOTTLE TO BRAGG MYSELF AGAINST LIVIN' WITH HER...



TRROUBLE WITH DRINKIN' WAS IT USED TO SET ME DOWN, I'D WORRY. I'D WORRY REAL BAD...



AFTER THE FIRST TWO WEEKS, I GOT REAL BESICKLED. THERE WAS NO REST ON THE BOUND...



SO I WENT UP INTO THE BEDROOM WHERE FANNY SAT WITH THAT STRAIGHT HOP OF HER UP IN CURLERS BUT I DIDN'T LOOK AT FANNY TWICE. I HEADED FOR THE CLOSET... FOR MY SUITCASE...



I BOUNCED MY SUITCASE ONTO THE BED AND THREW MY CLOTHES INTO IT. MY BRIDE JUMPED UP LIKE A BLEED STEVING HER, AND SHE THREW HER BONNET ARMS AROUND ME...



TONY, I KNOW I'M DUCK. I ONLY AM OLD, BUT I'M REAL. I NEVER TOLD YOU, DAD IF I'VE GOT A LOT OF MONEY, AND I LOVE YOU, TONY... AS MUCH AS I CAN. YOU'RE HANDSOME, FANNY. I HAVE JUST A FEW YEARS LEFT, STAY WITH ME AND MAKE THEM HAPPY YEARS, DEAR, AND WHEN I'M GONE, ALL THAT MONEY WILL BE YOURS!



WELL, IT TURNED OUT THERE WAS MONEY AFTER ALL. THE GUYS WERE RIGHT. SO I DID MY BEST TO MAKE FANNY HAPPY. I STATED. BUT I WORRIED WHAT SHE LIKED OR, IF SHE NEVER SPENT ANY OF HER DRAIN AND ONE DAY, I FOUND OUT...



I'M A RASHMAN
MRS. ODEON IS
MRS. BARRETT
MOM, MISTER,
MY WIFE! DON'T
YOU REMEMBER
WHEN YOU TOLD
ME ABOUT HER...

YOU HAVE A NICE
WIFE, SIR. SHE'S
VERY GOOD TO ME.
SHE ALWAYS HAS
HAD TO TELL
ME, I'M A
RASHMAN...

MAYBE I'M
WRONG BUT
I COULD
BREAK IT
WITH YOU
I MET THAT
WIFE...

BUT AT THAT MINUTE, RASHY TRU-
MILLED DOWN THE STAIRS WITH A LOAD
OF OLD PAPER. MARY'S BUTT,...

WOMEN'S DRESSER. JOHN CLOTHED,

THE RASHMAN TURNED UP IN

SOOT WHICH HE LICKED THEM...

FINE, MRS. BARRETT! IT'S
VERY FINE! YOU
GET SEVEN DOL-
LARS FOR THESE!
FOR THAT OLD
SARCASTIC
WIFE!

THE OLD CREEP STOPPED GOLD AND GAVE ME A
FIGHT STARE, LIKE I'D BESLUTED HIM. RASHY
TRIED TO COVER UP...

TONY DON'T
MEAN ANY-
THING. HE
JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND
IT'S OVERME
IT'S ABOUT
BUSINESS...

FEAR ME,
NO HARD
FEELINGS!
YOUR WIFE HAS
BEEN GOOD TO
ME... AND I TRY
TO BE GOOD TO
HER. HERE YOU
ARE, MRS. ODEON...
MRS. BARRETT!

AFTER THE RASHMAN PAID FRANK, HE LEFT. I FELT PRETTY
SICK INSIDE... YOU CAN IMAGINE...

WHAT'S WITH THIS RASH
BUSINESS, BABY? WHERE
DO YOU GET THEM?

WHY I PICK THEM UP,
TONY... HERE AND
THERE...

NICE HUNK! BOIN' MARRIED TO AN OLD MAN! MIGHT
BECAUSE SNOO I HAD TO FIND OUT SHE WAS A
RASH-FICKER BEHINDS. THAT WAS THE LAST
STRAW. I'D MADE UP MY MIND WHEN RASHY
ANNOUNCED, AFTER LUNCH...

FRANK DIDN'T SAY WHAT SHE WAS DOIN' OUT FOR, BUT I KNEW
IT HAD TO DO SOME RASH-FICKER! WELL THAT WAS ONLY WITH
ME, THAT GAVE ME TIME TO RUMMAGE THROUGH THE RUBBLE
IN THE ATTIC AFTER SOME PICKIN'S OF MY OWN...

I'M GOIN' OUT, BABY
DON'T BE TOO LONELY
WHILE I'M GONE!

FEAR RASHY
BABY!

I GOT TO FIND THAT GOURG! I GOT TO FIND THAT
GOURG AND GET AWAY! WE... MARRIED TO A TOAD-FACED
RASH-FICKER! I'LL GO AWAY IF I HAVE TO KEEP ON
LIVIN' WITH HER!



I TURNED THAT ATTIC UPSIDE DOWN
BUT IT WAS NO SOAP. I DON'T FIND
A THING.

IT'S GOIN' TO BE IN THE
HOUSE SOMEWHERE! YOU
JUST DON'T HAVE A
HUNDRED BRAINS IN A
HOURGLASS! I'LL
FIND IT IF I...

FOXY! WHERE
ARE YOU
TONIGHT?



FANNY DIDN'T SEEM SHOCKED ABOUT ME ROLLIN'
AROUND UP IN THE ATTIC. SO I FIGURED THAT'S NOT
WHERE THE HUNDRED IT'S WAS STASHED AT. I HAD
ALL DAY TIME WAITIN' FOR HER TO GO OUT AGAIN
BUT I COULD START LOOKIN' SOMEWHERE ELSE,
BUT FIRST THE RABMAN TURNED UP.

I COULD SWEAR
HE'S THE SAME GUY
THAT TOLD ME ABOUT
FANNY.

SUCH NICE RASS, MRS.
BARNETT. SUCH BEAUTY.
FIFIN' RASS.



AFTER A WHILE I GOT MAD AND RIPPED OPEN THE
BATTERS ON THE OLD BRASS BED I HAD TO BUY.
I DIDN'T HEAR FANNY SNEAK UPSTAIRS AND CREEP
INTO THE ROOM LIKE A SCRABBY OLD CAT. BUT SUDDENLY I FELT HER THERE...

FANNY... I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE FINALLY
CLEANING UP, TONY.



IT WAS FANNY... CALLIN' ME. I
WENT DOWN AND GOT HAIRBRUSHES
LOOKIN' AT HER... THAT PATCHED
AND FADED DRESS. THE TWO DIFFERENT
COLORED COTTON STOCKINGS... AND ON HER FEET... NO
KIDDIN'... SNEAKERS. SHE HAD A
BITY SACK STUFFED FULL OVER
HER SHOULDER...

LOOKS LIKE FANNY WAS
PRETTY GOOD TODAY.
FANNY, HOW MUCH YOU
NOT START SUCES
WORTH... HAIR BRUSH?



I COULDN'T STAND THE
MESS AROUND THIS
HOUSE ANY MORE, SO I
STARTED CLEANIN'
UP IN THE ATTIC.



FINALLY FANNY LEFT WITH HER BAGGAGE AND I WENT
TO WORK ON ONE OF THE LIVING ROOM'S
BATTERED MOTH-EATER FURNITURE, FLINNIN' THROUGH THE
TRASH-STUFFED CLOSET...

IT'LL TAKE ME MONTHS TO FIND THAT COUCH
+ A FEAT, WATE. UNLESS I'M LUCKY.



I COULD TELL SHE KNEW WHAT I WAS UP TO, 'CAUSE SHE
HAD A SMILE IN THERE THAT SLANTED THROUGH HER EYES.
SHE WAS LAUGHIN' IN HER BUTS 'CAUSE I COULDN'T FIND
HER HOARD AND IT MADE ME MAD...

PEACH, THAT'S WHAT I'M DOIN'... CLEANIN'
UP THIS FILTHY FESTIE! MAYBE YOU DON'T
LIKE THAT.



IN THE
ATTIC
OH, WELL
THAT'S
WELL...

THAT'S HOW IT WENT FOR WEEKS. EVERY DAY THAT RABEMAN CAME AND JUST PRACTICALLY GIGGLING OVER SOME FOOL BAGS MY WIFE SOLD.

LOVELY... ABSOLUTELY LOVELY, MRS. BARRETT.

AND EVERY DAY, AFTER SHE WENT OUT BORDENIN' THROUGH LONG-KNOKS-WHAT TRASH FOR RABS, I PLUNGED INTO MY TREASURE HUNT...

I GOTTA FIND IT SOON! I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! EVERY MINUTE I SAY IS TIME GUTTA MY LIFE WORSE! IT'S TORTURE!

AND SHE'D COME BACK... KNOWIN' WHAT I WAS UP TO, BUT I DIDN'T GIVE A HAMN EXCEPT THAT SHE WAS ALL THE TIME LAUGHIN' AT ME AND I'D GET ALL CHOKEUP WITH HATE FOR HER...

YOU MEN ARE ALL ALIVE. WHEN YOU TRY TO FIX UP A HOUSE, IT LOOKS WORSE THAN WHEN YOU STARTED.

FINALLY I COULDN'T TAKE IT NO MORE. I COULDN'T STAND FANNY GIVIN' ME THE HORSE-LAUGH. I COULDN'T STAND LOOKIN' AT HER. SO ONE DAY, I WENT DOWN THE CELLAR AND STRUTTED DOWN... BUT NOT FOR HER MONEY.

NOW, LET HER COME DOWN HERE! JUST LET HER COME!

AND WHEN SHE GOT HOME THAT DAY, I LISTENED TO HER CALL ME, BUT I DIDN'T ANSWER. I MADE SOME NOISE AND WAITED...

WHY, JONNY! HOW CLEVER! YOU'RE GOIN' TO BURY ALL THE OLD TRASH INSTEAD OF HAVING TO CARRY IT OUTSIDE.

AN, COME OFF IT, BABY! YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M DOIN'...

FANNY LOOSED AT ME REAL COOL LIKE AND WHISPED SARCASTICALLY...

OF COURSE YOU'RE SICKIN' FOR TREASURE... A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR TREASURE!

WROOOOOGH! I'M SICKIN' A BRAKE! YOUR GRAPES!

FANNY COULD SEE BY MY FACE I WAS LEVELIN'. IT WAS LIKE SHE'D NEVER EXPECTED THIS TURN OF EVENTS. SHE LET OUT A LITTLE COUGH AND STARTED TO KICK ME THRU THE FLOOR HARD.

EEEEEHHHHEEEEEEH!



THE PICK HOOED DEEP IN HER BACK AND SHE HIT THE CELLAR FLOOR LIKE AN OLD LOG. THEN I WENT TO WORK ON THAT FACE... THAT AWFUL MELT FACE. IT WAS JUST SOMETHIN' I HAD TO DO 'CAUSE I WAS GETTIN' EVEN FOR HAVING DESPARED MYSELF BY HAVIN' LOVE TO IT ALL THOSE MONTHS...



I WAS ONE-TIMED FROM WHAT IT'S DONE SO I HIT THE MAY EARLY THAT NIGHT AND SLEPT UNTIL I HEARD A BANG IN THE FRONT DOOR. IT WAS THE PESSMAN...



AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, THAT CRUMBY CROOK DROPPED COMIN' BACK, TELL THIS WOMAN I FLIPPED MY LIP...

I'VE BEEN OVER THE GUMP FROM ATTIC TO CELLAR! I GAVE YOU EVERY RAG I COULD FIND! I GOT NO MORE RAGS! NOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE, LEAVE ME ALONE!



I WAS READY TO SLAM THE DOOR IN HIS FACE BUT, JUST TO GET RID OF THE PEST, I DRAGGED DOWN SOME OLD FROZEN MEAT. COULD HE DON'T BEEN HAPPY WITH THEM,...



I SPENT DAYS COMBIN' THROUGH THE REST OF THE HOUSE. I EVEN TORE UP THE KITCHEN. I WASHED MEAT. ONE-SLU-WEWE. NOBODY IT WAS BETTER ME DOWN.



NOW I'M A GUY WITH A STRONG CONSCIENCE, SO WHAT WITH THE PESSMAN PESTERIN' ME AND FAMILY LYIN' DEAD IN THE CELLAR, I COULDN'T SLEEP TONIGHT. AROUND MID-NIGHT OR SO, I HEARD A ROSE IN THE HOUSE. I GOT A GUN OUT OF MY SUITCASE AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS FOR A LOOK.



"I TOLD YOU I
DIDN'T HAVE
TIME!" NOW...
BUT YOU DO?
MIST RAMS?
THE OLDFADE...
OR ME?"

He was gonna' go faint's brains. He says I'd killed her, and I knew then I'd have to kill him. I pulled the trigger... once... twice... he didn't even move...

I COULDNT MISS
AT SUCH CLOSE
RANGE! I HIT
YOU THREE...
I CAN SEE THE
HOLEs...

I LOVED HER,
MR. BARRETT!
I WANTED HER
TO BE HAPPY
I DONT
ENHANCe THAT

I DROPPED THE MAN AT HIS DOOR
WITH SHOTS, BUT HE JUST STOOD
THERE.

HE NEEDED MORE THAN I COULD
GIVE HIM... SOMEONE YOUNG...
SOMEONE LIKE YOU? THAT'S
WHY I TOLD YOU ABOUT HER MONEY! I WANTED
HER TO BE HAPPY! **DIE!**
I SHOT
YOU SIX
TIMES!
DIE
ALREADY!

I KEPT STARE' STUPIDLY AT THE SIX HOLES BURSED INTO HIS CHEST. THEN I SNAPPED UP THE AXE & SWUNG IT, CATCHIN' HIM BELOW THE SHOULDER. I DROPPED HIS BACK.

"YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!" YOUNG.
"NOT? THERE'S NO BLOOD!"
"YOU'RE NOT EVEN FLESH
AND BONE!"
"OF COURSE NOT,"
MR. BARRETT

HE LEAPED AT ME, WRAPPING HIS HANDS AROUND MY THROAT. FUNKY KIND OF HANDS, SOFT AND STRIKEABLE. HE KEPT CHOKIN' ME, CUTTIN' OFF MY AIR. I TORE AT HIS BODY, TRYIN' T MAKE HIM LOSE HIS HOLD, AND HIS HANDS CAME AWAY WITH CHUNKS OF SOFT PULP-SMELLIN' MEAT.

**RAGS! YOU'RE NOT HOME
BUT... CHORES... RAGS!**

**THAT'S THE LAST
YOU TO HER! SHE
NEEDS MORE THAN
ME! I LOVED HER...**

But I know the could
never love a bad man.

ANSWER

SHIT'S BURNIN' THAT FAB-TIME BUD,
NO DOUBT, TONY! WELL, DON'T FEEL BAD
BUT THAT'S YOUR DEAD. YOU WON'T
HAVE TO GROW UP 'TIL YOU'RE 30, FOH...
A BRAVE, THAT IS! WELL, HEED... HEED
TIME YOU HEAR THE OLD EXPRESSIONS...
"CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN"; ANOTHER
THE RAGGEDY OLD CLOTHES DIDN'T
IN HIS CASE! WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE
BROKING OFF! HOPE YOU ENJOYED
THE CRYPT-KEEPER
HOW MORIO MUCK-
ED UP THE THREE
SCHOOLMATES WELL,
SEE YOU NEXT IN
MY PASTOR PERIODIC
THE HAUNT OF
FEAR! 'TILL THEN,
KEEP A SHIFF...

LAST TIME'S SOFT PIG AND BLACK BONE, I HEAR & FEEL IT SO
MUCH IN MY HEAD AND LIPS, I HEAR FAIRLY CLEARLY

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APPROVAL. Get
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"I made \$100 in just a week in my spare time. Showing them is a good way for me to earn the extra \$100 each month."

M. K., Wisconsin

STUART GREETINGS, INC.
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NO. 24
JUNE



250
3rd
CANADA

TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! I SEE YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR HORROR AGAIN. WELL, REST ASSURED... YOUR APPETITE WILL BE SATISFIED. IN FACT, WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH WITH THIS PUTRID PERIODICAL, YOU WILL HAVE LOST YOUR APPETITE ENTIRELY. SO DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DROOLING. COME ON! WELCOME ONE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HORROR, YOUR HAUNTEATING NARRATOR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CHILL YOUR SPINE AND CHYLE YOUR BLOOD WITH THE SPINE-TICKLING TALE OF TERROR. I CALL...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



THE EVENING PERFORMANCE IS OVER AND THE CIRCUS GROUNDS ARE SILENT SAVV THE FLAPPING OF CARNES AND THE OCCASIONAL SNORT OF A CAGED ANIMAL. OVERHEAD, A COLD MOON ILLUMINATES THE MIDNIGHT LANDSCAPE. SUDDENLY, A SHADOWY FIGURE EMERGES FROM ONE OF THE GARNISHED TENTS AND SLIDES QUIETLY ACROSS THE MIDWAY WHISPERING...

EH-EH?

HERE, MARTA...

THE WOMAN PEERS INTO THE SHADOWS, STRAINING TO SEE, HER HEART RACING. THE MAN STEPS INTO THE DIM GOLD LIGHT, HIS ARMS EXTENDED...

OH, ERIC, DARLING...

MY DEAREST...



THEY ENFACE... WARMLY... PASSIONATELY... HUNGRY LIPS... HOLDING CLOSE...

WHAT ABOUT HE IS ASLEEP
CARL? HE DREAMS OF
FARIS AND THE
WOMAN HE HAS
KNOWN...



THE MAN LOOKS INTO THE WOMAN'S EYES, GREY-GREEN IN THE MOONLIGHT...

BUT YOU SAID YOU CAN ONLY HE TALKS
TO ME, ERIC. HE HAS
ALWAYS TAUNTED
ME WITH THIS
POWER HE HAS
OVER ME!



THE MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD BADLY, STROKING THE WOMAN'S SOFT FLOWING HAIR...

WHY DID YOU EVEN SAY IT WAS A MISTAKE, ERIC? I
HATED HIM, HATED
THIS FREAK OF
NATURE... THIS CLOWN IN A
LIFETIME OF COURAGE...
THIS ABILITY OF CARL'S TO
PROJECT THOUGHTS AND
WIRE TO READ THEM... FOR
LOVE?



WE DISCOVERED THIS ABILITY
QUITE BY ACCIDENT MANY YEARS
AGO. CARL IMMEDIATELY RECOG-
NIZED ITS GREAT VALUE. BEFORE I
KNEW IT, WE'D TEAMED UP AS A MIND-
READER ACT JOINED THIS TRAVELING
CIRCUS, AND WERE MARRIED...

AND YOU'VE BEEN
UNMARRIED SINCE...



UNMARRIED! I KNOW NOW THAT
CARL NEVER LOVED ME. I WAS HIS
SHAMMUS... HIS THOUGHT-
PROJECTION RECEIVER... A PIECE
OF APPARATUS... NOTHING MORE.
BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT REAL
LOVE IS... NOW THAT I'VE
MET YOU...

HE WOULD
NEVER LET
YOU GO.
WOULD HE?



NEVER! IF I DO, HIS
ACT GOES. HE'S NEVER
GIVEN ME A DIVORCE.
THERE'S NO ONE WHO
I ASKED...

THEN WE WILL RUN
AWAY... JOIN ANOTHER
CIRCUS. I HAVE MANY
OFFERS. AN
ANIMAL TRAINER IS
IN GREAT DEMAND.



THE WIND RIGHS ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS,
WHISPERS AROUND THE TENT ROPES, GASTS AGAINST
THE CANVAS... CARRYING THE SIGH, THE WHISPER,
THE GASTS OF THE LOVERS IN THE SHADOWS AND IN
HIS TENT, CARL STIRRS UNEASILY... OPENS HIS EYES...

MARTA, I, I...
MARTA! MARTA!

HER BED? IT IS EMPTY?
WHERE COULD SHE BE?



CARL SLIPS ON A ROBE AND COMES OUT OF HIS TENT...
OUT INTO THE WHISPERS, SIGHING, GASPING WIND...

VOICES? COMING FROM
BEHIND THE NEW ANIMAL
TRAINER'S TENT...

MY VOICE... AND
MARTA'S!



CARL MOVES THROUGH THE MOON-LIT NIGHT. HIS EYES BURNING LIKE
HOT COALS... LISTENING...

...AND AT THE END OF
THE MONTH WHEN I OBTAIN
MY CHECK, WE WILL
LEAVE YOU AND
I TOGETHER...

OH,
YES...
YES...



LISTENING TO THE EASENESS IN
HIS WIFE'S VOICE. THE PASSION, THE
HUNGER...

BUT LET'S NOT
TALK ANYMORE,
ERIC, DARLING.
HOLD ME... SLOWLY...



...AND THEN, SLOWLY, HE RETURNS
TO HIS TENT ONCE MORE. HE HAS
READ ENOUGH...

SHE... SHE HAS FALLEN
IN LOVE WITH HIM. SHE
IS LEAVING ME. SHE...
I... I MUST STOP HER...

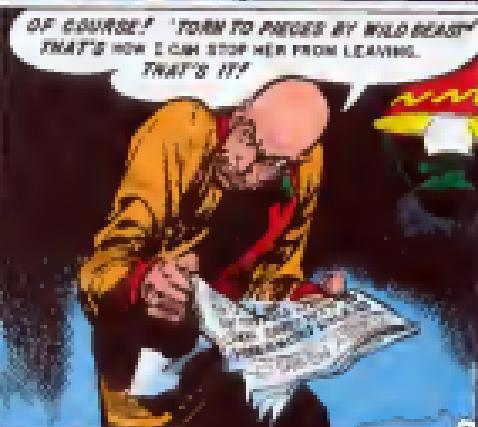


THE MOONLIGHT STREAMS THROUGH THE OPEN TENT-
FLAP... FALLING ACROSS THE PRINT, BLACK LETTERS ON
COLD WHITE... THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER...

WHAT'S THIS? 'BOBBIE DISINTERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD.
TOOK TO PIECES AS IF ATTACHED
BY WILD BEAST!'



OF COURSE! 'TOOK TO PIECES BY WILD BEAST'
THAT'S HOW I CAN STOP HER FROM LEAVING.
THAT'S IT!



LATER, WHEN MARTA RETURNS FROM HER RENDEZVOUS, AND CRAWLS BACK INTO BED, CARL PRETENDS HE IS ASLEEP.



ONLY AFTER MARTA HAS SLIPPED OFF INTO DEEP SLEEP, DOES CARL STIR AND RISE AND GO OUT OF THE TENT.



...AND CROSS DIRECTLY TO THE BIG ANIMAL TRAINER'S TENT WITH GUN IN HAND.



ERIC STUMBLER TO HIS FEET...

WHAT'S THE MEANING SO YOU
DO THIS, CARL? PUT
DOWN THAT GUN.
WE'RE GOING
TO RUN OFF
WITH MY
LION, ERIC.
WELL, WELL,
SEE ABOUT
THAT BONE!



CARL MOTIONS ERIC OUT OF THE
TENT AND DRAWS THE LONG SILENT
MUSKET TOWARD THE BIG-TOP.



THEY CROSS THE SAWDUST FLOOR OF THE BIG TOP
UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION CAGE. THE TAMED
BEAST RACES BACK AND FORTH HUNGRILY...



WITHOUT MY MUSKET I'D BE
HELPLESS... PARALYZED...
UNABLE TO DEFEND MYSELF!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, CARL,
HAVE MERCY!



PITY IS AN EMOTION
BELONGING TO THE
FITFUL, ERIC.
GET ON.

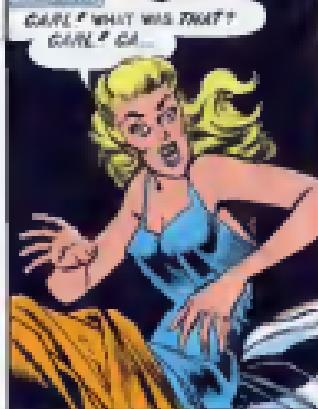
CARL SWINGS OPEN THE BARRICDED DOOR AND PUSHES. ERIC SCREAMS AND GOES SPINNING. THE LION SNARLS.



AND THEN, THE CIRCUS GROUNDS ECHO WITH THE BLOOD-CURLING SHRIKS OF A MAN BEING TORN TO SHREDS BY THE RAZOR-SHARP FAVES OF A BLOOD-CRAZED BEAST.



ERIC'S ANGUISHED SHRIKS AWAKEN MARTA AND SHE LOGS AROUND WILDLY...



CARL'S BED IS EMPTY! OUTSIDE THE TENT, FOOTSTEPS POURD UP THE MUDWAY TOWARD THE BIG-TOP. MARTA SLIPS ON A ROPE AND BURSTS FROM THE TENT...



SHE RUNS WITH THE REST OF THEM... UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION TRAINER'S CAGE.



SHE SCREAMS HIS NAME TWICE, AND THEN SHE JUST STANDS THERE, WATCHING THE BEAST LICK AT THE SLASHED AND SHREDDED BODY UNTIL SHE HAS TO TURN AWAY AS THE MALEFA CLEEPS OVER HER...



AND THEN, SICK, SHE RETURNS TO HER TENT AND SITS AND WAITS, CRYING, UNTIL CARL COMES IN WITH THAT EVIL SMILE ON HIS COLD IMPASSIVE FACE...



BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MARTA'S MIND AS TO HOW ERIC DIED. CARL'S BED WAS EMPTY WHEN ERIC BROKE AWAKENED HER. THE SHEETS WERE COOL.

I HATE YOU! YOU WILL GET OVER IT, MARTA!

THE NEXT DAY'S PERFORMANCE IS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE TRADEWIND. THE TENTS ARE LOWED. THE CIRCUS PREPARES TO MOVE ON.

LOOK OUT! CARL!

IT HAPPENS SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING. CARL IS HELPING WITH THE DISMANTLING OF THE BIG-TOP WHEN THE MAIN SUPPORT TORPEDOES.

GOOD LORD!



THE HEAVY POLE CRUSHED DOWNWARD UPON CARL, CRUSHING HIM BENEATH ITS MASSIVE WEIGHT.



AND WHEN THE HUGE SUPPORT IS LIFTED, CARL LIES DEATHLY STILL. HIS GLAZED EYES STARING.



MARTA IS SUMMONED. SHE STRAINS IMPASSIVELY OVER HER HUSBAND'S BODY, SHEDDING NO TEARS, SHOWING NO SIGN OF EMOTION...



IT... IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, MARTA! THE MAIN SUPPORT...

ME... HE WILL HAVE TO BE BURIED BEFORE WE CAN GO ON!

MARTA'S VOICE IS COOL, CALLOUS. AS SHE ASKS SOMEBODY SEND FOR AN UNDERTAKER...



MARTA LOOSES DROWN AT THE STILL FORM OF HER HUSBAND LYING ON THE TARBARS FLOOR... AND EVEN THOUGH SHE READS HIS THOUGHTS, SHE SHOWS NO SIGN OF RECOGNITION...

MARTA! MARTA, I AM ALIVE! I'M NOT DEAD! MARTA! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! TRY TO HEAR WHAT I AM THINKING! I'M PARALYZED, MARTA! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M PARALYZED! I CAN SEE! I CAN HEAR! I CAN'T MOVE!

AS THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS ASSISTANT LIFT POOR CARL INTO THE WICKER, MARTA MOVES FORWARD...

MARTA! PLEASE! SAVE ME! I'M ALIVE! MARTA! I'M ALIVE! PARALYZED! NOT DEAD! PARALYZED! MARTA! PLEASE!

BUKIT



OH, MARTA! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

YES, MARTA!

PLEASE DON'T EMBALM HIM. BURY HIM AS HE IS. HE WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THAT WAY!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, MARTA...

MARTA, NOT!



MARTA LOOKS DOWN INTO PARALYZED EYES THAT CAN STILL SEE... WHISPERS INTO PARALYZED EARS THAT CAN STILL HEAR...

GOOD-BYE, CARL!

MARTA! OH, BOO! MARTA...



AT THE FUNERAL, MARTA STANDS, HER FACE A GRANITE MASK, BEHIND THE TROWING PIT BELOW CARL'S COTIN.

YOU CAN STOP THEM, MARTA! THERE'S STILL TIME! I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME. I ASK YOU PLEASE! I SEE IF YOU DON'T LET THEM BURY ME ALIVE!

LOWER THE COFFIN!



AND EVEN THOUGH THE SOIL IS SHOVELLED DOWN UPON THE COFFIN, MARTA'S FRANTIC THOUGHT WAVES STILL COME THROUGH TO HER... TO HER AND ONLY HER... TO MARTA, WHO TURNS AND WALKS AWAY DOWN THE PATH LEADING OUT OF THE CEMETERY...

MARTA! DON'T DO THIS PLEASE! SAVE ME! PLEASE! CHILDREN... MAKE HER SAVE ME!



THE AFTERNOON WARS, THE NIGHT BREEZE COMES IN, WHISPERING OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS. SIX FEET BELOW, IN HIS COFFIN, CARL CONCENTRATED AS THE PRECIOUS OXYGEN SLOWLY DISAPPEARS...

MARTA! COME BACK! COME SAVE ME! TILL DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING! HAVE FAITH IN ME! HAVE FAITH!



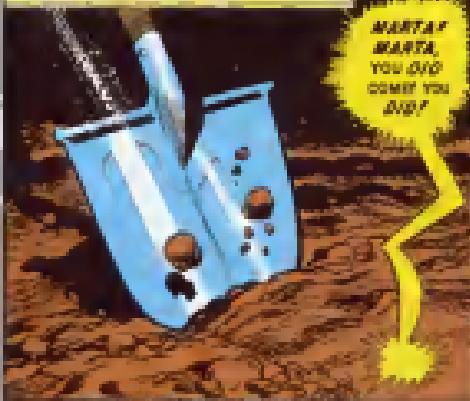
THE STARS COME OUT, WHITE PIN-POINTS IN A VELVET SHROUD. A FIGURE MOVES OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS...

I KNOW YOU ARE RELEASING MY THOUGHTS, MARTA! I KNOW...



A SHOVEL DIGS INTO THE SOFT EARTH...

MARTA! MARTA, YOU DON'T COME TO DUST!



THE DIGGING CONTINUES, THE SHOVEL SODDENING THE SOFT EARTH. FINALLY THE LID OF THE COFFIN SWINGS BACK...

MARTA! MARTA! IT'S ERIC, LORNA. IT'S ME, NOT MARTA!



AND THEN AS CARL LIES HELPLESS, PARALYZED... LIKE A LION-TAMER WITHOUT A WHIP... FEELING THE RAZOR-SHARP TEETH Biting AND TEARING AT HIS FLESH... UNABLE TO SCREAM AT THE ECRUSHING PAIN, HE THINKS OF THE NEWSPAPER LYING IN THE MOONLIGHT. THE NEWSPAPER THAT FIRST GAVE HIM THE IDEA OF HOW TO KILL ERIC...

BOOGIE BRANTERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD, TORN TO PIECES AS IF ATTRACTED BY SOME WILD BEAST! OH, ERIC! THEY WERE WRONG! THIS IS NO BEAST! IT'S A GHOUL!



HELLOW! ERIC! RIDDICK CARL, DIED UP JUST LIKE ERIC... BEING TORN TO BITS AND GRAPPLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF, AS FOR MARTA, SHE READ CARL'S FINAL THOUGHTS, AND GOT QUITE A MENTAL PICTURE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON! JUST ONE MORE INVESTIGATION ON THIS WHOLE SUBJECT AT THE BOB CEMETERY FOREMAN KEEPS TELLING HIS WORK CREWS, 'ONE THAT GRAVE-IT, GRAVE IT'...

WELL, V.E. BRAHES, ERIC, HOW?



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEARTY SALUTATIONS, SLIME SAVERS!! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOFUS, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU IN C. C.'S HAB WITH A FAVORITE YOLP-YAH! FROM MY CREEP-COLLECTIEN. SO HAVE THE BACARÉ READY AND I'LL OFFSET YOUR STOMACH WITH THE TUMMY-TURNER I CALL...

PEARLY TO DEAD

THE STORY BEGINS DURING WORLD WAR II, WHEN THE UNITED STATES MARINES WERE SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY INCHING ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, INVASING AND BATTLING FOR EACH BLOODY ATOLL, EACH JAPANESE-INFESTED CORAL ROCK. ONE INKT BLACK STALLION NIGHT, A SMALL BOAT MOVED SILENTLY TOWARD THE CORAL REEF THAT BOUND THE PEACEFUL LAGOON OF ONE OF THESE JAPANESE-HELD ISLANDS. THERE, TWO MEN CROUCHED QUIETLY STUDYING THE DANCING FIRES ON THE SHORE ACROSS THE PLACID LAGOON.

BETTER DROP THE ANCHOR, PHIL. THIS IS ABOUT AS CLOSE IN AS WE DARE GO WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

RIGHT, LARRY.



THE ANCHOR SLID OVER THE SMALL BOAT'S BEEF AND DROPPED WITH A MUFFLED SPLASH INTO THE BLACK PACIFIC. THEN, STRANGELY, THE TWO MEN BEGAN TO UNDRESS...

WHILE I'M CLEARING THE STEEL CHECKING, YOU START SETTING THE DEMOLITION CHARGE, PHIL.



THEY JERKED ALMOST NAKED IN THE PACIFIC NIGHT, MUSCLES RIPPLING. THEY BENT AND SLID THE WIDELY-SHAPED BLACK RUBBER FLIPPER ONTO THEIR FEET, PULLED THEIR RUBBER MASKS WITH THE ROUND GLASS WINDOWS OVER THEIR FACES...



...AND WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS... THE BUSINESS OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE INVASION OF THE FOLLOWING MORNING. THE ONE NAMED LARRY SLIDED DOWNWARD, FLICKING ON HIS LAMP, SEARCHING OUT THE TREACHEROUS PROPELLER-SHATTERING STEEL NETTING...



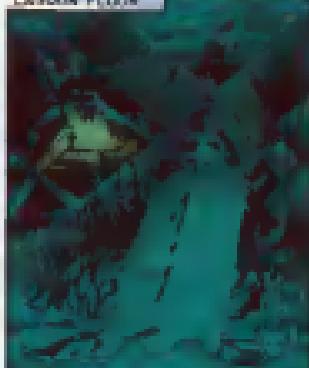
AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE SAW IT... STRETCHING AWAY BELOW HIM IN THE GLOOMY BURLY DARKNESS... THE GULF STREAM...



SILENTLY, THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... THE FABULOUS FROGMEN... SLID OVER THE RISE OF THEIR SMALL BOAT AND INTO THE CHOPPY PACIFIC...



...AS THE OTHER, THE ONE NAMED PHIL, SWIMMED BELOW THE SURFACE TO THE PILINGS SUNK IN THE LAGOON FLOOR...



...WITH THE SETTING CLIPPED ANG BATED AND CUT AWAY AND RENDERED HARMLESS, LARRY SWIM TOWARDS PHIL TO HELP PLACE THE DEMOLITION CHARGE, HIS LANTERN BEAM RUSHING ACROSS THE BARRY BOTTOM OF THE LAGOON...



AS LARRY CIRCLED OVER THE BED, STUDING THE ABORINALLY-LARGE WHALE-BEELIKE SEA CREATURES WITH THEIR PRICELESS GLOWED EYES, IMBEDDED IN THEIR SWELLING MEATY BOOKS, PHIL SLID TOWARD HIM, STANDING BIKE-STEADY...



THE TWO MEN SURFACED BEHIND THEIR BOAT, SAVING FOR BREATH...



AT DAYBREAK THE NEXT MORNING, THE ASSAULT BOATS STORMED THE QUIET LAGOON, AND PROPELLERS CHURNED BLOOD INTO THE WAVES ABOVE THE OYSTER BED...



V-J DAY! PEACE! IT CAME SUD-GENETICALLY... AFTER THE SECOND A-BOMB WAS DROPPED. THE JAPANESE MADE AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER AND THE WAR WAS OVER.



SAN FRANCISCO'S GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE CAME UP OUT OF THE MIST ONE MORNING. THE TROOPSHIP SLIPPED BENEATH IT AND MOORED IN TOWARDS A PIER WHERE BANDS PLATED AND CHILDREN CHEERED AND WOMEN BOBBED HAPPILY...



THEY CAME DOWN THE SANDPLANK TOGETHER, SEE BY SIE, LARRY AND PHIL, BUT THE GIRL THAT WAITED WITH TEAR-STAINED CHEEKS HAD EYES FOR ONLY ONE OF THEM.



LARRY TRIED TO HIDE THE JEALOUS ANGER...THE HURT THAT HE FELT. GLADYS'S PREFERENCE HAD COME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO HIM...

"I WANTED TO TELL YOU, I UNDERSTAND, GLADYS... WELL... I..."



PHIL HAD WON AGAIN. IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT. EVER SINCE THEIR COLLEGE DAYS. THEY'D BOTH COME OUT FOR THE SWIM TEAM...

"THAT'S GOOD TIME, SON! OR WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR MAMMA WANT?"



LARRY'D DONE HIS BEST, BUT PHIL... PHIL HAD DONE JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER...

"CONGRATULATIONS, BOY! THAT BEATS ANOTHER TIME BY EIGHT TENSORS!" EN... THE NAME'S PHIL CANNON COACH!"



LARRY AND PHIL HAD BECOME FAST FRIENDS IN COLLEGE, BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS THAT RIVALRY BETWEEN THEM...



...NOT ONLY IN THE POOL, BUT ALSO ON THE CAMPUS...

"HEY, YOU THOUGHT I WANTED YOU TO MEET GLADYS HADN'T I? GLADYS, MEET OUR TWO SWIM CHAMPS, LARRY MILES AND PHIL CANNON."

"VERY NICE!" "SORRY, LARRY. I'M MISS BARON ALREADY. I'VE BEEN WITH MATT..."



WHEN GLADYS HAD COME INTO THEIR LIVES, THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO BOYS HAD INCREASED. THEY BOTH FELL IN LOVE WITH HER...

"GLADYS, YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU! SAY YES... AND I'LL BUY YOU THE BIGGEST ENGAGEMENT RING IN THE STORE..."



THEN, PEARL HARBOR, AND THE U.S. WAS IN A WAR. THE NAVY HAD COME TO LARRY AND PHIL... ASKED THEM TO JOIN THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... AND THEY'RE ACCEPTED...



AND HOW THEY WERE BACK FROM THE WAR, STANDING ON A JAMMED PIER FULL OF RETURNED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS AND HAPPY LOVED ONES, AND PAUL HAD BEEN AGAIN . . .



IT'LL BE A LOVELY PLACE TO TAKE GLADYS OR OUR WEDDINGMOON, LARRY.



DISCHARGE! CIVILIAN CLOTHES AGAIN! FREEDOM FROM REGIMENTATION . . . DISCIPLINE! THEY WERE ALL LARRY'S NOW . . . AND A SECRET, TOO! A MILLION DOLLAR SECRET! JUST ONE THING . . . ONE THING WITH THIS, BETTY! GLADYS! . . .



LARRY CONVINCED PHIL THAT AFTER HE WAS MARRIED THERE'D BE NO CHANCE TO TRY OUT THEIR EQUIPMENT, AND PHIL RELUCTANTLY AGGREED. THEY DROVE OUT TO A LONELY BEACH . . .



LARRY HAD PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY! WITH PHIL GLADYS GLASTS, THE SECRET OF THE FEARLESS . . . EVERYTHING . . . WOULD BE HIS . . .



THEY STRUGGLED WILDLY, THERE IN THE FOAMING SURF OF THAT LONELY CALIFORNIA BEACH. LARRY HELD PHIL'S THROAT IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP, UNTIL PHIL'S BODY WENT LIMP AND LIFE LEFT IT AND IT SLIPPED FROM LARRY'S GRASP AND SANK BENEATH THE OCEAN WAVES . . .



AND LARRY CAME OUT OF THE WATER ALONE WITH A GRIM SMILE ON HIS FACE AND THE STORY HE'D TELL GLADYS SO CLEAR IN HIS MIND . . .



GLASYS LISTENED TO LARRY AS HE SOBBED OUT THE STORY OF HOW THEY'D COME SWIMMING HE AND PHIL AND PHIL'D GONE DOWN... AND

...AND BEFORE I COULD...
SAY IT TO HIM, HE WENT DOWN FOR \$2000. HE...
HE MUST HAVE SOTTEN A DREAM. I... I TRIED TO
GET HIM UP, BUT THE SAWDUST...

NO!
BOB...
NO, OH,
LORD!



WORE HIS EYES BEFORE HIM! WAS THE FOAM AND THE SPRAY AND THE CHURNING WATER BEHIND THE SHIP PLAYING TRICKS ON HIM OR DID HE ACTUALLY SEE THE BOGATED WHITE FOOFS...

WHAT IS IT, LARRY?

THERE'S IN THE WATER'S L... NO! IT CAN'T BE! I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!



WAS IT A DREAM OR DID LARRY ACTUALLY SEE THE WHITE FOOFS FISH-FETED FACE IN THE PORTHOLE THAT NIGHT WHEN HE'D BEEN STARTLED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP...

HURRY BRO... BRO... GOOD LORD!



IT WOULD TAKE TIME LARRY DECIDED. TIME FOR GLASYS TO FORGET PHIL. IN THE MEANWHILE, HE WOULD GO TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC... TO THE TINY ATOLL WITH ITS FABULOUS OYSTER BEDS... AND MAKE HIS FORTUNE...

I'LL BE BACK IN THREE MONTHS, GLASYS PERNAPS, BY WHICH TIME YOU WILL HAVE SOTTEN OVER TWO, AND MAYBE THREE AND I...

I'LL ADVISED STOP LOVING ME, LARRY! DON'T NEVER...



THE TRIP TO THE ATOLL WAS LONG, BUT LARRY DIDN'T MIND IT. ONCE ON BOARD, HE LOST NO TIME IN MAKING FRIENDS...

BABY, YOU'RE THE MOST GORGEOUS DOLL ON THIS SHIP... WELL... OH... DON'T JUST LEAVE ME HANGING...



AND WAS THE FOG ODOR OF THE SEA AND DECAY AND ROTTING FLESH THAT SEARED HIS NOSEBLES WHEN HE OPENED HIS CABIN DOOR THAT NIGHT JUST LARRY'S IMAGINATION...



AND WAS IT THE SEA, OR DID HE ACTUALLY HEAR THAT LAUGHTER THAT SPLASHED BLOOD-DRIPPING LAUGHTER COMING IN FROM THE MURKY FOG BEYOND THE SHIP THE NIGHT HE STROLLED THE DECK ALONE...



THE SHIP DOCKED AT TAHITI AND LARRY LOVED HIS TIME IN HERING A PLANE TO TAKE HIM SOUTH TO THE ATOLL.

“CAN YOU LAND THIS CRATE IN A LAGOON? I CAN DROP IT ON A CORAL, MISTER!”



ON THAT PLANE TRIP SOUTH... SWIMMING LOW OVER THE BLUE PACIFIC... WAS LARRY CRAZY... OR DID HE SEE IT AGAIN... THERE JUST BELOW HIM... THAT ASHEN, FULP, BLOATED FORM?

“SWATTER, MISTER CANHON! I AM SCOTT! CHOKED A LITTLE, I SUESS.”



THE ATOLL CAME UP... A PEARL AGAINST A BLUE SAPPHIRE SEA... LURE... GUARDING ITS OWN PEARL TREASURE. LARRY CANT HIS PEARL FROM HIS MIND WHEN HE SAW IT...

“THERE IT IS! LAND IN THAT LAGOON!”



THE TINY SEAPLANE CAME DOWN SILENTLY AND SAT BOBBING QUIETLY IN THE BLUE LAGOON AS LARRY UNPACKED HIS GEAR, REMOVED THE FLIPPERS AND THE RUBBER GLASS-WINDOWED MASK, AND BEGAN TO SWIM.

“WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU GOING TO DIVE FOR SOMETHING?”

“THERE'S AN OYSTER BED IN THIS LAGOON... WITH PEARLS THE SIZE OF YOUR FINGERS AND I'M GOING TO GET ME A FEW...”



TINY FISH SCATTERED BEFORE HIM AS LARRY SHOT DOWNWARD. HE PASSED THE OLD RUSTED METTINS... THE SUNKEN ASSAULT BOAT... THE WATER-LOGGED BLASTED PILLAGE... AND THEN HE SWAM... THE OYSTER BED. HE SWAM TOWARD IT... FASTER...



LARRY WAS SO BUSY WRENCHING THE LARGEST OYSTER HE COULD FIND FROM THE SANDY BOTTOM THAT HE NEVER NOTICED THE PUTRID, SLIMY, WHITE FORM DRIFT TOWARD HIM. AND WHEN ITS BLOATED MAMMOS CLOSED AROUND HIS NECK, AND THE ROTTED FACE GRINNED AT HIM, IT WAS TOO LATE...



“HEH, HEH! YEAH, KIDDIES! THAT'S MY TURN THE PROOF OF THE SEAPLANE WAITED AROUND FOR LARRY TO COME UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. FINALLY, HE SHRUGGED, WENT THROUGH LARRY'S PANTS, EXTRACTED THE MONEY FROM HIS WALLET, FORSED THE REST OF LARRY'S GEAR INTO THE LAGOON, AND TOOK OFF AND FOLLY TAKE OFF WHEN YOU READ THE NEXT NIGHT - KEEPER YEAH! HEH, HEH! NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO GAY! I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAIL THE KAULF OF HORROR! BYE! S.O., THAT IS!”



HERE'S A BUBBLY LITTLE TALE OF TITANIC TERROR! I CALL IT...

PRAIRIE SCHOONER



MILDRED JACKSON FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR OF HER HOUSE AND BOULEAUDED WITH JOY. HE STOOD ON THE PLATE-STARVED FRONT PORCH, DRESSED RESPLENDENTLY IN HIS CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM, HIS FACE BLOODED FROM FORTY YEARS AT SEA. HIS EYES COLD AND SQUINTING, HIS MOUTH DRY, HIS TWO SOFT CASES BEHIND HIM...

ERAZ! ERZA! WHY DIDNT YOU WRITE ME?
YOU WERE COMIN' TO VISIT! OH, ERZA...

HELLO, MILDY. GOT A PLACE FOR
MY OLD SEA BOB BROTHER TO
SOME DOWN FOR A SPELL?



MILDY LED ERZA INTO THE PARLOR...

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR
YOU HERE, ERZA. YOU KNOW
THAT. HOW LONG WILL YOU
STAY?

JUST A SPELL,
MILDY. JUST TELL
I DECIDE WHAT I'M
GONNA DO NEXT.
TSEE... THEY FOON
AFAR MY SHIP. THEY
RETARDED ME.



RETARDED... OH,
ERZA, I'M SO
SORRY.

YER, MY DAYLIN' DARE AND
OVER, MILDY. I'M A LAND-
LUMBER, NOW. WELL, WHERE
DO I STOR MY BEART?



THAT WAS HOW EZRA JACKSON CAME TO LIVE WITH HIS BROTHER MILDRED. AT FIRST, MILLY WAS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE HIM. AFTER ALL, HE WAS AN OLD MAN... AND EZRA WAS COMPANY. BUT AS TIME WENT ON, EZRA BEGAN TO DO STRANGE THINGS...



ONE NIGHT, MILLY WAS ROUSED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP BY HEAVY PADS SHAKING HER ROUGHLY...



IT WAS OBVIOUS TO POOR MILLY THAT HER OLDER BROTHER WAS ILL... MENTALLY ILL. THE SHOCK OF BEING RETIRED HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HIS MIND HAD SHATTERED; HE FANCIED HIMSELF AT SEA AGAIN... THE HOUSE, HIS SHIP, AND SHE, HIS CREW...



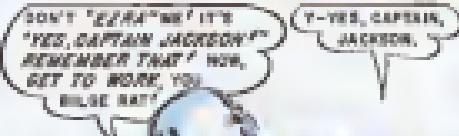
"NOTHING, MILLY! I WAS JUST WATCHING THAT SHIP ON THE HORIZON!"



FROM THAT NIGHT ON, MILLY WAS FORCED TO "STAND WATCH"! SHE HAD TO MOVE THROUGH THE HALLS OF THE OLD HOUSE FROM TWO A.M. TO DAWN, CARRYING A LANTERN AND SHOUTING...



EIGHT BELLS AND ALL'S WELL!



Y-YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON.



MILLY HAD BEEN A SCHOOL TEACHER IN HER YOUNGER YEARS. SHE'D WORKED HARD AND MANAGED TO SAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. SHE'D USED PART OF IT TO BUY THE HOUSE SHE NOW LIVES IN. THE REST, SHE'D INVESTED WISELY, AND SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY. BUT WITH EDNA'S ARREST, HER MEAGER INCOME WAS NOT ENOUGH...

"PHEAAAH! YOU CALL THIS FOOD? YOU DARE TO FEED THIS SLUP TO YOUR CAPTAIN? YOU OUGHT TO BE STRUNG UP AND HAVING TEH LASHERS."

"IT'S... IT'S THE BEST WE CAN AFFORD, EDNA! PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND!"



SO MILLY WAS FORCED TO EARN EXTRA MONEY TO AUGMENT THE SMALL INCOME SHE DERIVED FROM HER INVESTMENTS. SHE HAD TO TAKE IN WASHING...

"WHERE IN BLAZES ARE YOU, YOU SLOBBY SEA COOK?"

"EM... IN THE CELLAR, CAPTAIN. EM DOING THE SHIP'S LAUNDRY!"



EDNA STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR FLOOR, STARING ABOUT HIM WITH WIDE BLINKING EYES...

"PERFECT! PERFECT! JUST THE PLACE FOR MY GUNTERS. HERE YOU SEND FOR THE SHIP'S CARPENTERS... THE SHIP FITTERS..."

"T-TEE, CAPTAIN!"



I UNDERSTAND ONE THING, YOU BALLEY PIG EITHER THE FOOD IMPROVES, OR IT'S WRONG FOR YOU. AND IT'S "CAPTAIN JACKSON" I HEAR?

"Y-TEE, CAPTAIN JACKSON!"



EDNA CAME DOWN THE CELLAR STAIRS, SCREAMING...

"YOU'RE "BELOW", YOU DUMB CANOLIERS! NOT "IN THE CELLAR" "BELOW"!"

"T-TEE, CAPTAIN I'M... BELOW!"



MILLY WAS HELPLESS. SHE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE... EXCEPT, PERHAPS, TO HAVE EDNA PUT AWAY. SO SHE CALLED IN A CARPENTER, A PLUMBER...



"AWAY, UP THERE! COME BELOW!"

"PLEASE GENTLEMEN, REMEMBER, HONORABLE HEE'S QUITE HARMLESS..."

"GLOOMIE, WE MISS JACKSON STAND, MISS JACKSON STAND!"

EZRA STORMED ABOUT IN THE CELLAR, SHOUTING
BUT HIS ORDERS.

ZIP OUT THOSE WINDOWS,
CLOSE 'EM UP, PUT UP FALSE
WALLS. MANDATORY PANELED
WALLS. SET IN PORT HOLES,
REAL PORT HOLES—THAT OPEN!

TEL, MR.
JACKSON

CAPTAIN JACKSON! PUT OCEAN
SCENES BEHIND THE PORT HOLES.
HANG SHIP'S LANTERNS AROUND.
PUT IN A JUNGLE VALLEY AHEAD.
MAKE EVERYTHING AUTHENTIC. THIS
IS MY SHIP!

YES,
CAPTAIN!



AND POOR MILLY WITHDREW HER LIFE'S SAVINGS
FROM HER INVESTMENTS TO PAY FOR THE REMODEL.

4,500...5,000 DOLLARS.
HERE YOU ARE, MR. BURNEY.

THANK YOU,
MILLY. I HOPE
YOUR BROTHER
IS HAPPY WITH
THE JOB WE DID!



"BELOW" IN HIS SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON BELLOWED...

STAND BY TO CAST OFF, ENGINE ROOM,
FULL SPEED ASTERN, ALL HANDS,
MAN YOUR STATIONS. ON THE DOUBLE.



MILLY CAME "ABOVE" CARRYING HER LAUNDRY
BASKET FILLED WITH THE WASH SHE'D BEEN
TAKING IN.

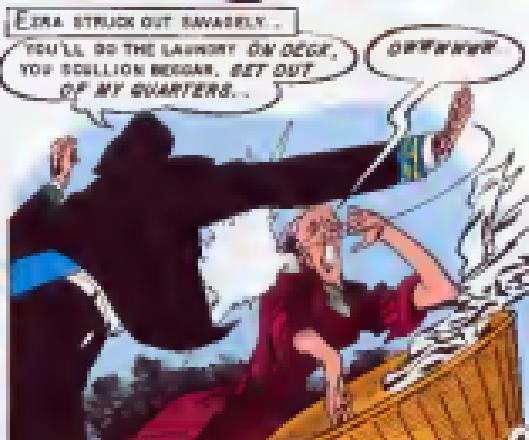
WHAT IN BLAZER ARE YOU
COMING DOWN HERE WITH
THAT?

I'VE GOT TO DO
THE SHIP'S
LAUNDRY, CAPTAIN.
I'M...

EZRA STRUCK OUT SAWABY...

YOU'LL DO THE LAUNDRY ON DECK,
TOP SCULLION BEHIND. GET OUT
OF MY QUARTERS...

OFFEEE...



WITH HER INVESTMENTS RIPIED OUT AND THE INCOME FROM THEM GONE, MILLY HAD TO TAKE IN MORE WASH THAN SHE COULD HANDLE IN ORDER TO MEET EXPENSES. AND EZRA'S ABUSE BECAME WORSE AND WORSE...

"SCOUR OUT THAT HEAD YOU FO'GGLE DRUDGE!"

"-YES, CAPTAIN!"

Poor Milly would escape, every chance she could get, and lock herself in the upstairs bathroom in order to do the wash in the tub. And as she scrubbed, she would listen to Ezra's ranting and raving.

"EASE THE HELM! GIVE 'ER MORE RUDDER! STEADY AS YOU GO! HARD APORT! STEADY! STEADY GO!"

DOH...DOH...

ONE HOT SUMMER'S DAY, EZRA STOOD AT THE OPEN PORT HOLE, SHOUTING OUT AT THE SEA-SCAPE SCENE BEYOND...

"AHOOY AHOOY THEREBY! SHOO AHOOY! HOLD FAST... STAND BY!"

WHILE UPSTAIRS, DIRECTLY OVERHEAD IN THE BATHROOM, MILLY PARTED OVER A LOAD OF WASH...

THE HOT WATER, RUNNING INTO THE TUB OVER THE SOAKING CLOTHES, SENT UP CLOUDS OF STEAM WHICH FILLED THE LOOSED BATHROOM...

SUDDENLY MILLY SLUTCHED AT THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN HER CHEST, TOPPLING OVER...

"AHHH..."

AND AS HER HEART FAILED AND HER LIFE Faded WITH IT, THE BOILING WATER OVERFLOWED THE TUB, POOLING ABOUT HER PROSTRATE BODY, BURNING THROUGH THE BATHROOM FLOOR...

IN HIS CELLAR SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON LISTENED AS THE WATER, LEAKING DOWN FROM THE OVER-FLOWING SEATUBS ABOVE, FILLED THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FALSE MAHOGANY PANNELED WALLS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE...

STORMY SEA TONIGHT. BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES. WE'RE IN FOR A BLOW.



SUDDENLY, THE WATER BEGAN TO POUR THROUGH THE OPEN PORT HOLES...

ALL HANDS! ALL HANDS! WE'RE SINKING ON WATER! MAN THE BILGE PUMPS. SECURE THE BULKHEADS...



THE CELLAR FILLED WITH STEAM. CAPTAIN JACKSON STAGGERED TO THE PORT HOLES, SLAMMED THEM SHUT. THE PRESSURE OF THE WATER CRUMPLED THE PANNELED WALLS...

ABANDON SHIP! WE'RE SINKING!



SLOWLY THE WATER ROSE IN THE CELLAR, BOILING, SCALDING, BLISTERING EZRA'S AGED BODY, BUT HE STUBBORNLY STOOD FAST...

ABANDON SHIP! THE CAPTAIN MUST REMAIN...



...UNTIL THE RISING HOT WATER REACHED HIS CHIN, HIS NECK, POURED INTO HIS MOUTH AND STENCHED HIS TONGUE... HIS THROAT, HIS LUNGS...

BLISS... GLORIOUS...



HEE, HEE! YEP, KIDDIES. THAT'S MY HORRIFIC MARIONET OFFERING. EZRA FINALLY ENDED UP... IN... NOT WATER! THIS IS THE FIRST CASE ON RECORD, BY THE WAY, OF A CAPTAIN SINKING DOWN WITH HIS SHIP IN THE MIDDLE OF A KANSAS PRAIRIE... IN A CELLAR! AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE OLD WITCH, WHO IS WAITING TO WIND UP MY REEL RAG! REMEMBER! IN YOUNG A MAN... AND AN ADDICT... YOUTH AM. E.C. FAN-ADDICT! EHHH! YEE, NOW!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! AND NOW, IT'S MORNING-MEAL-TIME. WELCOME TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, CREEPS. THIS IS YOUR REVOLVING RESTAURATEUR, THE OLD WITCH READY TO SLIME SLIME... AND WIND UP CREEP'S BUDGET-MONEY FOR THIS ADORABLE ISSUE. CAME FOR SOME SEA FOOD? WELL, HERE'S A TASTY TERROR TO-EAT TO TURN YOUR STOMACH. I CALL THIS SLOP-SERVING.

HALF-BAKED!

GARTH BUGAR STOOD IN THE SPLEEN'S KITCHEN OF 'THE SEA SHELL RESTAURANT' STARING IN MORNING FASCINATION AT THE BOILING, BLUE-GREEN, SPINY-LEGGED CLAWED CREATURES THAT SCRATCHED DIZZY AROUND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BUTTER TUB. CAUTIOUSLY, HE REACHED IN AND PULLED ONE OF THEM FROM THE TUB, HOLDING IT UP. HE LAUGHED SARDONICALLY.

"YOU'RE HEFTY, YOU DISGUSTING THING. HOW HOW DON'T STRUGGLE! IT'S NO USE! HEE, HEE!"



GARTH REACHED FOR A KNIFE. HE PLACED THE STRUGGLING LOBSTER, BELLY UP ON THE HINE WOODEN KITCHEN TABLE AND CRIMMED DOWN AT IT.

"FIRST, WE SPLIT YOU OPEN... FROM HEAD TO TAIL... LIKE SO..."



THE LOBSTER SQUIMMED. CALVIN FORCED THE KNIFE BLADE AGAINST ITS SOFT-SHELLLED UNDERSIDE AND, WITH A SUITE SAWING MOTION, CRUNCHED IT THROUGH THE LOBSTER, NOW PRACTICALLY BEHEVED IN HALF, STILL WHIRLED ITS SPINY LEGS AND WAVED ITS HIVE CLAWS ANGRILY.



CALVIN STARED INTO THE STOVE AT THE BROILING LOBSTER. HIS EYES GLINTED ALMOST MANIACALLY AS HE WATCHED ITS STRUGGLING ARMS.



CALVIN'S FACE GROW GRIM AS HE TURNED TO HIS CHEF.

I HATE ONLY ONE HORRIBLE CREATURE: HORRIBLE CREATURES SHOULD DIE HORRIBLY!



A LOBSTER IS A LIVING THING, MR. SUGAR. NO LIVING THING SHOULD BE MADE TO SUFFER.

CALVIN MOVED THE THRASHING SPLIT LOBSTER ONTO A PLATE AND SLID IT INTO THE STOVE, BELOW THE LICKING BLUE FLAMES OF THE BROILER.

AND NOW WE BROW, FOR ALIVE WE LISTEN TO YOU HISSE AND POP UNTIL YOU TURN ORANGE-RED AND YOU STOP YOUR SQUIRMING.



CALVIN GRINNED.

I MUST LOWER THE FLAMES SO THAT THE NEXT ONE WILL NOT BLOWOFF.



BEHIND CALVIN, THE AAA JEWEL RESTAURANT'S CHEF SHOCK HIS HEAD AS HE WATCHED HIS EMPLOYER.



WHY DO YOU TAKE SUCH sadistic DELIGHT IN KILLING THOSE POOR LOBSTERS, MR. DURANT?

I HATE THEM, JOHN!



A LOBSTER IS HIDEOUS... UGLY! IT DESERVES TO SUFFER, JOHN. IT'S OWN HORRISH BEAUTY IS UGLY DEATH.

PERHAPS... TO A LOBSTER... IT IS YOU WHO ARE UGLY, MR. DURANT.

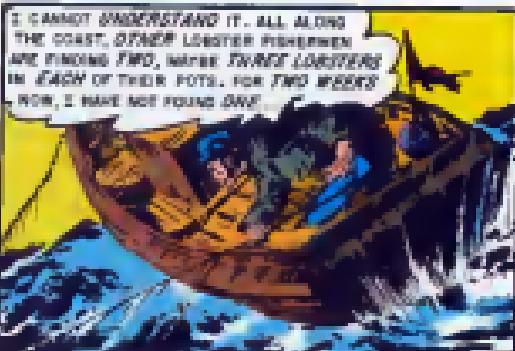
MEANWHILE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FEW MILES UP THE SEACOAST FROM THE SEA SHELL RESTAURANT, A FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS INBOARD OVER THE FOAMING OCEAN SWELLS TO A CORK FLOAT FROM WHICH FLEW A TATTERED FLAG.

THE LAST ONE. IF THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ONE, WE WILL HAVE NO MONEY FOR FOOD.



THE FISHERMAN PULLED UP BESIDE THE BOATING MARKER AND PULLED IT INTO HIS SEA SKIFF. SLOWLY, TENACIOUSLY, HE MAULED IN THE DRIPPING LINE THAT WAS FASTENED TO THE CORK FLOAT...

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. ALL ALONG THE COAST, OTHER LOBSTER FISHERMEN ARE FINDING FIVE, NAPES, TWENTY LOBSTERS IN EACH OF THEIR POTS. FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, I HAVE NOT FOUND ONE.



FINALLY, THE LOBSTER TRAP SURFACE, AND THE FOUL SCENT OF THE FISH HEAD, PLACED WITHIN IT AS BAIT, BEAMED THE FISHERMAN'S INSTEINS...

EMPTY! ALL EMPTY! NOT ONE LOBSTER IN ANY OF MY POTS.



SADLY, THE FISHERMAN SWUNG HIS INBOARD BACK TO THE BEACH WHERE A WOMAN AND CHILD STOOD IN THE DOORWAY OF A WIND-SCARRED SHACK, WAITING.

NOT A DAY, LUCY! NOT ONE LOBSTER! I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.



THE FISHERMAN ENTERED HIS DRY SHACK AND SAT DOWN HEAVILY...

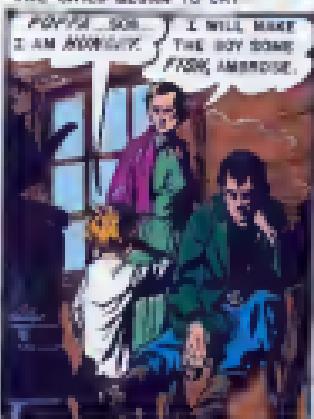
PERHAPS TOMORROW AMBROSE...

TOMORROW, TOMORROW, WE HAVE SAID THAT FOR TWO WEEKS!



THE CHILD BEGAN TO CRY.

POPO'S SON, I AM HORRIFIED. THE BOY SOME FISH, AMBROSE.



FISH? THE BOY NEEDS FISH. LADY LOBSTERS COULD BOY HIM DOWN. LOBSTERS BRINGS A GOOD PRICE, BUT I CANNOT CATCH THEM. MY POTS ARE EMPTY.

PERHAPS TOMORROW YOUR LUCK WILL CHANGE, AND YOUR POTS WILL BE FULL, AMBROSE.



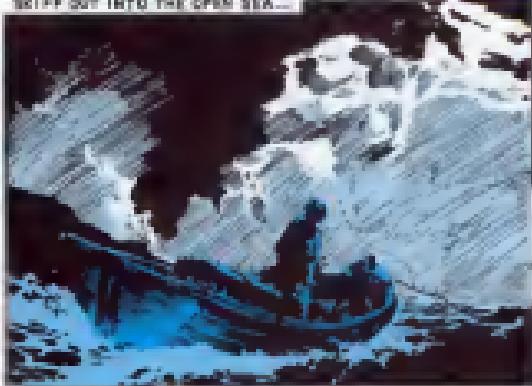
THE SEA-JAULE RESTAURANT WAS NOTED FOR ITS BUBBLED LOBSTER. PEOPLE CAME FROM MILES AROUND TO FEAST ON THE SUCCULENT WHITE MEAT DIPPED IN BUTTER SAUCE. CALVIN DUGAN DID A THRIVING BUSINESS.



JOHN HODGES AND LOFT, CALVIN LISTENED AS THE CAR MOTOR ECHOED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, THEN TURNED TO THE ALMOST EMPTY TUB...



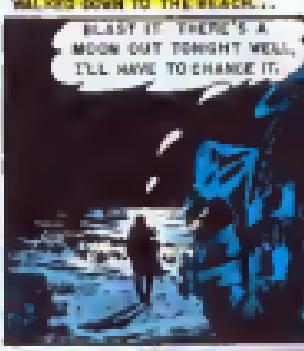
THE INBOARD MOTOR COUGHED AND SPATTERED, THEN BEGAN TO HUM EVENLY. CALVIN GUIDED THE SKIFF OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA...



AFTER CLOSING TIME THAT NIGHT, JOHN, THE CHEF, REMINDED CALVIN...



AFTER A WHILE, CALVIN LEFT THE RESTAURANT. HE LOCKED UP CAREFULLY, BUT HE DID NOT GET INTO HIS CAR. INSTEAD, HE WALKED DOWN TO THE BEACH...



A FEW MILES OUT HE PULLED UP BESIDE A RICKING BARKER FROM WHICH A TATTERED FLAG PLAPPED...



AMBROSE, THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN, FACED THE FLOOR OF HIS DINGY SHACK. LUCY, HIS WIFE, WATCHED HIM WITH BAG EYES...

"COME TO BED, AMBROSE. YOU MUST GET UP EARLY."

"I AM NOT SLEEPY! LUCY, I AM THINKING ABOUT MY LOBSTER POTS."



AMBROSE POINTED OUT TO SEA. OUT TO THE DISTANT TOSSED SWELLS.

"SOMEDAY OUT THERE! AMBROSE! THAT'S WHY MY LOBSTER POTS ARE ALWAYS EMPTY. SOMEDAY IS BREAKING MY LOBSTERS."



AMBROSE WAS OUT OF THE DOOR OF HIS WEATHER BEATEN SHACK IN A FLASH.

"AMBROSE! COME BACK!"

"I'LL GET HIM, LUCY! I'LL GET HIM!"



SUDDENLY CALVIN LOOKED UP. BEARDED ONE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, ANOTHER SEA SHRIFT GLIDED TOWARD HIM SILENTLY.

"IT'S THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN. HE MUST HAVE ROWED OUT. THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T HEAR HIM! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!"



AMBROSE STOPPED PADDLING. HE LISTENED. FAR AWAY, OVER THE REAR OF THE SURF POUNDING THE NEARBY BEACH, AMBROSE HEARD A SOUND - A DULL HUMMING SOUND.

"A SEA SHRIFT. OUT THERE! IN THE MORNING SO THAT'S IT!"

"WHAT IS IT, AMBROSE?"



Far out on the moonlit waves, CALVIN DROWNED. LIFTED A LOBSTER POT INTO HIS SEA SHRIFT.

"TWO BEAUTIES! THAT'S SEVENTEEN ALREADY! AND I'VE ONLY RAISED HALF OF HIS TRAPS."



CALVIN STRUGGLED WITH HIS IMBALANCE, TRYING TO STAB IT. THE OTHER SEA SHRIFT PULLED ALONGSIDE, THE FISHERMAN IN IT GLARED AT HIM WITH BURNING EYES.

"SO? TO WORK OF MR. ODEAN HADN'T BOTHERED TO STOP BY LATELY TO SEE IF I HAD ANY LOBSTERS TO SELL. HE KNEW!"

"KEEP AWAY, AMBROSE. KEEP AWAY! I WARN YOU!"



AMBROSE SHAPLED...

YOU DIED TRYING I'LL PAY
YOU AMBROSE MONSTER! YOU,
MY CHILD HAS BEEN AMBROSE!
WITHOUT MEAT AND MEAT AND CLOTHES
BECAUSE OF YOU!

AMBROSE SCREAMED...

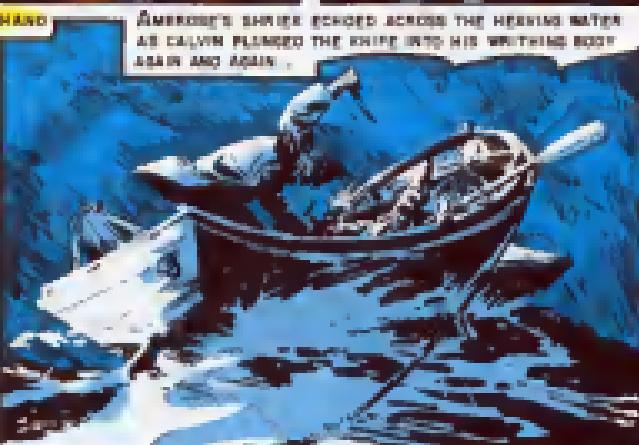
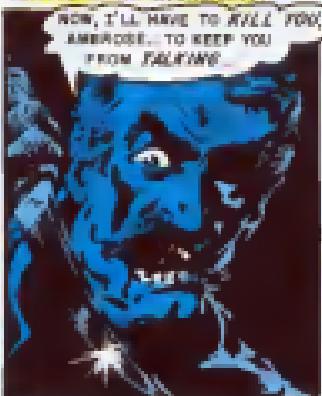
PAY ME I'LL NEVER I'LL PAY
I'M GOING TO REPORT A FOOL,
YOU TO THE POLICE. AMBROSE
THAT'LL THROW YOU IN JAIL, WHERE YOU WILL
YOU BELONG! I'LL PAY
YOU FORGET THIS!

NO! I WON'T TAKE
YOUR MONEY! IT'S
JAIL FOR YOU...

...JAIL.
YOU FORCE
ME TO DO
THIS,
AMBROSE!



THE KNIFE BLADE IN CALVIN QUENN'S HAND
BLISTERED IN THE MOONLIGHT...

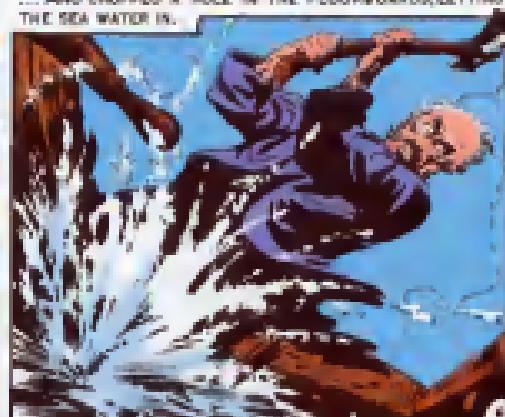


AMBROSE'S SHRIEK ECHOED ACROSS THE HEAVING WATER
AS CALVIN PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO HIS WRITHING BODY
AGAIN AND AGAIN...

THEN, CALVIN LASHES AMBROSE INTO HIS SEA SHIP.



... AND CHOPPED A HOLE IN THE FLOORBOARDS, LETTING
THE SEA WATER IN.



SLOWLY, THE BOAT, WITH AMBROSE'S BODY, DRAK BELOW THE TOSSED OCEAN WAVES...



CALVIN STARTED HIS INBOARD AND GUIDED HIS BEACHCRAFT BACK TO THE BEACH...



...AND LOADED THE BUTTERTUB WITH THE STOLEN LOBSTERS INTO HIS CAR TRUNK...



HE STARTED HOME, ROARING DOWN THE COAST ROAD AT BREAKNECK SPEED, WHEN THE BLOW-OUT OCCURRED...



...AS CALVIN'S LURCHING CAR SPUN OVER, THE STEERING WHEEL SHATTERED, RIPPING INTO HIS BODY... TEARING SLASHING...



HE LAY THERE, PINED, BURNING, HIS BODY ALMOST SPLIT IN TWO, AS THE OVERTURNED CAR CLEAED FIRE AND THE FLAMES LICKED AT HIM AND HE BURNED AND BURNED AND WAS BURNED ALIVE...



HIS, HEY! THAT'S MY STORY! KEEPER CALVIN ENDED UP LIKE THE LOBSTERS HE'S BEEN STEALING. WHEN I CAME UPON HIS BURNING CAR, HE WAS JUST ABOUT DONE. A WAS SO BAD THERE WASN'T A DAB OF BUTTER SAUCE AROUND! AND TALKING ABOUT JABEE, YO'D BETTER HURRY UP AND JOIN US E.G. FAN-ADDICTS! BUT REMEMBER, MEMPHIS IS LIMITED TO 280,000,000 PEOPLE, SO DON'T LOSE OUT! GET BACK ISSUES OF OUR PERVERTED PERIODICALS

AND WRITE TO THE CREEP-KEEPER AND LET HIM KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF OUR BOOK. FOR DETAILS, HEAD C.G.'S COLUMN



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